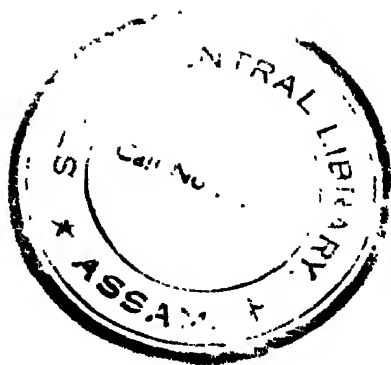
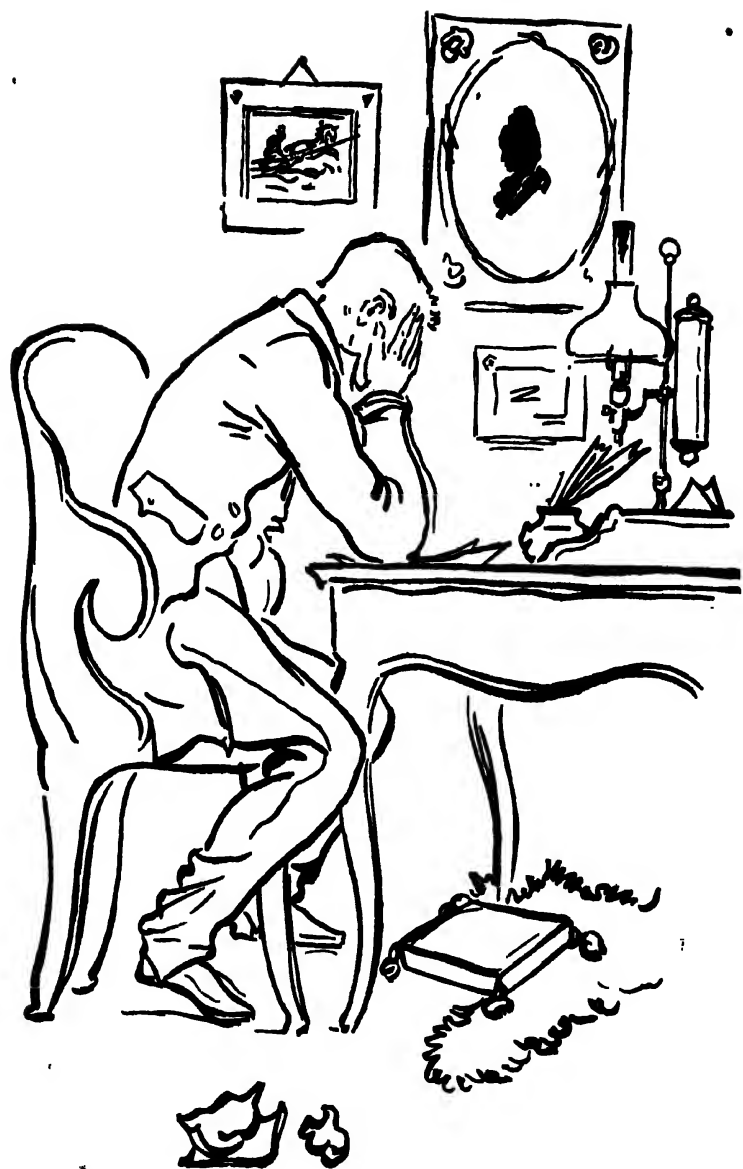
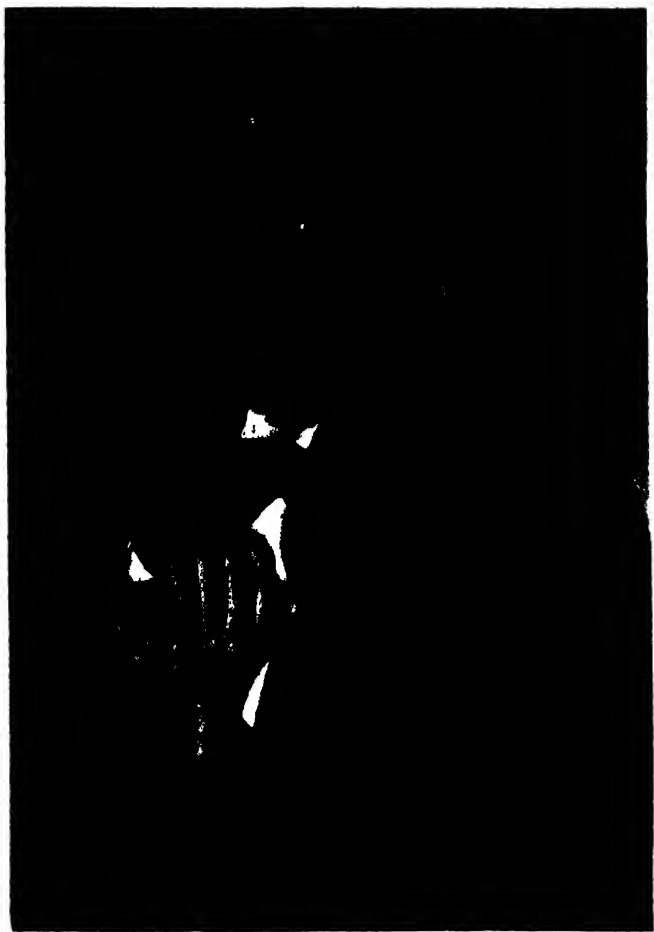


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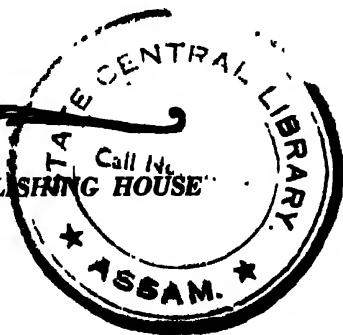
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А. Ф. Писемский
ТЫСЯЧА ДУШ

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY IVY LITVINOVA
DESIGNED BY Y. GOLYAKHOVSKY

2635/2/RP

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Part One

I

ITEM FROM bulletin issued by Civil Service Authorities: "Collegiate Assessor Godnev, Permanent Inspector of N. Municipal School, has resigned, retaining the right to wear uniform and receive the pension appertaining to his rank." Further on there follows: "Candidate Kalinovich appointed inspector to N. School."

On reading this order the author fell into involuntary meditation. "Alas!" said he to himself, "there is no permanency in this world. So Pyotr Mikhailich Godnev is no longer an inspector, though according to the most accurate calculations he bore this title for precisely twenty-five years. What will the old fellow do now? Will he change his way of living? And where will he spend the morn-

ings from eight to two, now that he no longer has his inspector's cubby-hole to go to?"

Godnev, who was a widower, lived with his daughter Nastenka in a little house with a garden in the town of N., and was the legitimate owner of thirty souls in a village not far from the town. A spinster of forty-five, by the name of Pelageya Evgrafovna, kept house for him. Despite her age, and the fact that she was no beauty, the wife of the local superintendent of police, a lady prone to coming out with indiscreet remarks, said he should have atoned for his sin by marrying his charming chatelaine, though others, more moderate in their opinions, asked what could be the sin of such old people, and why should they marry?

Pyotr Mikhailich was known not only by everyone in the town and the district, but, I believe, by half the gubernia too. Every day at seven in the morning he went to the market for provisions, and was moreover in the habit of addressing everyone he met on the way. For example, if a worthy burgheress happened to thrust her kerchiefed head out of the window of her dilapidated dwelling when he passed, he would invariably greet her:

"Good day, Fyokla Nikiforovna!"

"Good day, Pyotr Mikhailich!" she would reply.

"Have you been long back from the gubernia town?"

"I got back yesterday, Sir. I didn't come back by the coach, Sir. I trudged back through all this dirt."

"How go your affairs?"

"My case has reached the higher authorities."

"Ah well—a good thing it's got so high!"

"Is that a good thing, Sir?"

"Very good! Very good!" Godnev would say, proceeding on his way.

To tell the truth, Pyotr Mikhailich did not know what his neighbour's case was, or whether it really was a good

thing that it had reached the higher authorities, he just wanted to cheer her up.

In front of the merchant's brick-built abode stood the merchant's coachman with his sheepskin jacket slung over his shoulders, and Pyotr Mikhailich considered it his duty to say something pleasant to him too.

"Well, brother, have you broken in your horse?" he asked.

"More or less. It takes time," answered the coachman.

"Yes, yes, I saw you! You're a fine fellow—you know how to drive!"

The coachman gave a gratified smile.

Godnev got to the butcher's shop just as the owner was opening it.

"Aha, Siliverst Petrovich, up rather late today!" said Godnev.

"Can't be helped, Pyotr Mikhailich! I got delayed somehow. How's my lad getting on? How are things over there?" said the butcher, going behind the counter.

"Your lad? He's all right—he's a clever lad. A bit wild, though. Broke two panes in the schoolroom window again yesterday," replied Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Lord have mercy on us!" exclaimed the butcher, shrugging his shoulders. "What I'm going to do with that lad I simply don't know! Nobody can say I spoil him! Oh, what's the good!"

"Come now! You shouldn't be too severe. You can spoil by beating, too."

"You've got to beat an imp like that, though," replied the butcher, and added: "Shall I weigh you a bit of beef?"

"Very well—a bit of beef, then. But mind it's tender!"

"I'm not likely to give you a tough bit. We don't sell you the bad cuts—we keep them for our general's ladies."

"You want me to believe that? What droll creatures you shopkeepers are!"

"We do, I assure you! I should like to know what that dame and the postmaster are hoarding their money for!"

Pyotr Mikhailich only laughed and shook his head.

From the butcher's he went into the yard behind some small shops, where the women were selling rolls, earthenware pots, vegetables, thread, and all sorts of other articles.

"You here again with your onions!" said Pyotr Mikhailich to a woman standing beside a great basket of onions.

"He could not bear onions.

"Now, now, good old gentleman, don't spoil my trade—take a string yourself, then you can talk!"

"I don't eat onions, silly creature!"

"That's your sort, you gents—'don't eat onions.' You only like sweets."

"Now don't be cross, I'll take a string!" said Godnev, and bought some onions, which he presented to the next beggar he met, with the words: "Here's some onions for you! But don't eat them without bread, they're bitter. Come round to my house and they'll give you a bit of bread."

A priest came towards him. Pyotr Mikhailich bowed to him from afar.

"Good day!" he said, taking off his cap and approaching for a blessing.

"Good day!" replied the priest in deep bass accents.

"Well, Father, have you read my book?"

"I have, I was going to return it to you this very day, with my thanks. A very pleasant work."

"Yes, yes, an instructive book. Bring it round when you have time."

"I'll be sure to," replied the priest, bowing obsequiously.

On returning home Pyotr Mikhailich went straight to the kitchen, where the cook, under the personal supervision of Pelageya Evgrafovna, was lighting the stove.

"Here you are, oh, Commander! The fruits and gifts of the earth!" he said, handing the housekeeper a paper bag which she took and emptied of its contents, shaking her head and emitting exclamatory sounds something like: Eh, eh, eh ... hey, hey, hey. ...

"Now what are you grumbling for? How you nag, Mistress! Is my marketing so bad?"

To this remark Pelageya Evgrafovna replied in mocking tones:

"Oh no—very good, of course!" She was never satisfied with what Pyotr Mikhailich bought, and she was right, for some of his tradesmen friends sold him short weight, others sold him stale goods, and careful house-keeping and cleanliness were a sort of insatiable passion in Pelageya Evgrafovna. Though of German descent, she could not speak a word of any other language but Russian. When she had arrived (why, nobody knew) at the tiny district town, she almost died of starvation at first, till she was taken to the hospital. Pyotr Mikhailich, noticing a new patient during one of his visits to the wards, entered into conversation with her, and having been widowed that year, took her into his home to look after the little Nastenka. But Pelageya Evgrafovna, beginning as a nurse, gradually took the whole household under her care. From early morn till late at night she flitted hither and thither about the house and its outbuildings. Now she climbed into the hayloft, now she ran down to the cellar, or busied herself in the garden. She polished and swept whatever could be swept and polished, and, most important of all, her sleeves rolled up and, enveloped in an apron from eight in the morning, she did the cooking. To give her her due she was a great hand at the preparation of certain dishes. Her greatest triumphs were at salting and pickling, and the fish she salted in Lent was so delicious that whenever Pyotr Mikhailich ate it—and on

sultry summer days it was preceded by cold beet-soup—he would say:

“Lucullus himself never had such fish and such soup, gentlemen!”

Pelageya Evgrafovna always washed Pyotr Mikhailich's cuffs and neckcloths, Nastenka's collars, sleevelets and lace fichus, and would undoubtedly have washed everything else, if her strength had sufficed, for she said it made her quite ill to see the linen after it came back from the laundress.

It would have been hard to say when Pelageya Evgrafovna slept and what she ate, and she was not fond of being asked about this. She snatched a sip of tea at odd moments, only sitting down to table for a minute or two, though her place was always laid there. Hardly had the roast been served when she would jump up and go to the kitchen for something. And when Pyotr Mikhailich asked her on her return: “How is it that you never eat anything yourself, oh, Commander?” she would only laugh and reply: “If I didn't eat I shouldn't be alive,” and again set off for the kitchen.

Pelageya Evgrafovna only accepted her wages (120 paper rubles a year)* after a certain amount of coercion. Pyotr Mikhailich usually brought her ten rubles at the end of the month.

“What's this?” asked the housekeeper.

“Your money. Money's a good thing. Kindly take it and sign for it,” her master replied.

“Oh, stop your nonsense!” she would say, turning aside and looking out of the window.

“Law and order are not nonsense, Ma'am. Kindly take it,” said Godnev still more insistently.

* The paper money issued in Russia in 1769 underwent extreme fluctuations, owing to which there were two money units—the silver ruble and the paper ruble. In the eighteen forties the paper ruble was valued at about 27 kopeks in silver.—*Tr.*

"As if I didn't get my keep here!" said Pelageya Evgrafovna, still looking out of the window.

"Come now, take it! You know I don't like this!" said Godnev more insistently than ever.

Pelageya Evgrafovna took the money angrily and flung it contemptuously into her work-basket.

And every time tears of gratitude came into her eyes, despite the dissatisfied expression of her face.

"Took a beggar off the side of the road, saved her from starvation, and still wants to pay her wages. Ought to be ashamed of himself! You've got a daughter of your own—you'd do better to save something up for her," she muttered.

"Don't you dare to say that to me, Commander, d'you hear? It's not for you to teach me!" Pyotr Mikhailich said, shouting her down, and Pelageya Evgrafovna took her wages without another word, but always unwillingly.

Having handed over his purchases to his housekeeper, Pyotr Mikhailich would go into his drawing-room and drink tea with Nastenka. The conversation between father and daughter was almost always something of this sort:

"Again sitting up all night, Nastasia Petrovna! It's not right, my dear, it isn't, you know! There's a time for work, a time for rest, and a time for sleep."

"I was reading, Papa. I've finished the book I got yesterday."

"And that's wrong, too. What will there be for us to read today? There'll be nothing to read in the evening."

"Oh, I'll finish reading it to you. I'll read it again with the greatest pleasure. Fancy that Valentine turned out ever such a bad man!"

"Now don't tell me! Read it to me! I'd rather find out what happened from the author," interrupted Pyotr Mikhailich, and Nastenka did not go on.

After this they usually parted. Nastenka sat down to

read her book or copy out certain passages, or strolled in the garden. She never did any housework or needlework. Pyotr Mikhailich, for his part, donned his uniform and set off for school. He was usually met in the entrance by the hall porter, Gavrilich, an invalided soldier, nicknamed "Grater" by the schoolboys on account of his deeply pitted face. It required the truly Christian patience of Pyotr Mikhailich to keep Gavrilich as school porter for ten years, for the invalid was obtuse, lazy and ill-mannered from sheer old age. He seldom cleared away or cleaned up anything, so that Pyotr Mikhailich was obliged at least once a month to engage women at his own expense to scrub the floors. The porter was in the habit of breakfasting early on warmed-up cabbage soup, which he usually put in the oven of the inspector's room every evening and kept there till the next morning. Almost every time Pyotr Mikhailich arrived in the morning, he said:

"Again steaming up the place with your soup, Grenadier! My, how stuffy it is here! It's suffocating!"

"You always think I'm heating up my soup," protested Gavrilich.

"Well, and so you are, and denying it, too, telling lies in your old age, you sinner!"

"Look in the oven yourself, you'll see there's nothing there."

"I know there's nothing in the oven—you've eaten it. You don't even take the trouble to wipe the fat off your face, you blockhead. And you dare to answer back! I'll sack you, mind, and you can go begging in the streets."

"Sack me! As if people can't live by begging!" replied Grater, going out.

"Fool!" Pyotr Mikhailich called after him.

But here the matter always ended.

After busying himself in the inspector's room over the drawing up of various reports, Pyotr Mikhailich would make the rounds of the school between lessons, usually

beginning with the first form, in which there were usually clouds of dust.

"Savages! Tatar hordes! Hey, there! Quiet! Silence! Be so quiet that you could hear a pin drop!" cried the old man, looking very stern.

It became a little quieter in the room.

"If you make a noise again I'll give it you—all of you! I'll give one in every ten a wiggling," he concluded solemnly, and went out.

In the passage a little ruffian ran into him, almost knocking him over.

"What are you up to?" cried Pyotr Mikhailich, flinging out his arms. "You're like an unbroken colt. Just you wait, I'll put a bridle on you!"

"Pyotr Mikhailich, Modest Vasilich made me go without dinner. It's not my fault," said Kalashnikov, a third-form pupil, a hulking, unbrushed, unwashed lad of about eighteen, wearing a padded jacket.

"You probably deserved it," said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I didn't do anything, so help me! Ask anyone! Everyone knows how unfair he is to me. I can't stop in today—it's a market-day. I must help my dad in the shop."

"All the better, you'll be sorry, and understand it's wrong to play the fool and be rude," said Pyotr Mikhailich and got away quickly.

Kalashnikov imitated him, making sure that the old man heard him:

"'It's wrong to play the fool and be rude,' old cock! I'll go without my cap! Much good may it do you!" he cried, tearing a corner off a map on the wall in his rage.

Severity and harsh measures were simply not in Pyotr Mikhailich's character. He managed the boys with more or less success, having them flogged in extreme cases, a task he always imposed on Gavrilich, never witnessing its performance and instructing him to administer the punishment less with a view to pain than to humiliation.

But Gavrilich, who cherished a profound hatred for the boys, administered such punishment (so long as the culprit was not too strong for him) that the victim, once escaped from the inspector's room, sobbed for two hours. When Pyotr Mikhailich had to deliver a rebuke or a reproof to the teachers, he was at his wit's end. As a matter of fact the only one who required this was the history teacher, Ekzarkhatov, a university graduate, and no fool. He knew his subject well, and for almost the whole of every month he was quiet, thoughtful, conscientious and extremely taciturn. But the day after he received his monthly salary he always came to lessons tipsy. He would joke with the boys, and then sally forth into the street, his hat on one side, a cigar between his lips, singing or whistling. Should occasion arise he was even ready to pick a quarrel. He would feel a yearning for female company and to satisfy it would go to the river-bank and stand beside the rafts on which the laundresses washed the linen. Whenever he came up against crockery, window-panes, or members of his household, he would strike out. But after he had slept all this excitement off no one was so quiet as he. While living in Moscow he had married a widow-woman of uncertain social position with five children—a stupid quarrelsome person who, he said, had driven him to drink. While her husband was on the rampage his wife took refuge with neighbours. But when he recovered, she nagged at him mercilessly, and if he ventured to say a single word she would throw whatever came to hand at him, tug at her own hair till it stuck out wildly, and rush off to complain to Pyotr Mikhailich, fairly bursting into the inspector's room and bawling: "Father Pyotr Mikhailich, for God's sake, help me! What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?"

"What's the matter? What d'you want of me?" Godnev would ask, though he knew very well what the matter was.

"The same old thing—drinking for two days! Do what you like! I can't stand it! There's not a plate or a cup in the house! He's broken everything! I hardly got away with my life! It's the third night I've spent in the bath-house with the children!"

"My God! My God!" Pyotr Mikhailich would say, shrugging his shoulders. "Calm yourself, Madam, I'll speak to him and I trust it will be the last time."

"Pyotr Mikhailich, make things hot for him! Couldn't you . . . if you would—supposing you were to give him a flogging?"

"How can you say such a thing? You ought not to talk like that!" Pyotr Mikhailich would protest.

"Gavrilich!" he called out on one of many such occasions. "Ask Mr. Ekzarkhatov to come to me."

And Ekzarkhatov appeared, stoop-shouldered, in a worn uniform, his face emaciated, a bruise beneath his left eye . . . a most melancholy figure.

"You are beginning to yield to your unfortunate habit again, Nikolai Ivanich! I think you know the Greek saying: 'Drunkenness is madness in miniature.' Why should you want to be mad? With your mind, your education . . . it's too bad, it is really!"

"Forgive me, Pyotr Mikhailich, no one could feel it more than I do," replied Ekzarkhatov, bending his head still lower.

"You ugly mug, you!" interpolated his wife, no whit abashed by the presence of the inspector. "It's all talk—in your heart you're not a bit sorry! Five children and what do you do for them? Am I to steal, am I to go begging because of you?"

"Dear, dear!" said Godnev, shaking his head.

"Forgive me, Pyotr Mikhailich!" repeated Ekzarkhatov.

"I know you are sorry and I trust you will never do it again. Kindly go to your class," said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"And you, Madam," he added when Ekzarkhatov had gone, "you see I did not spare him. I gave him a good dressing-down. You need no longer fret. . . ."

But Madame Ekzarkhatova was not to be so easily consoled.

"I needn't fret? What did you say to him? You patted him on the back again, the cur!" she cried.

"Tck, tck! A lady should be ashamed to use such language!" said Pyotr Mikhailich. "Husband and wife should correct one another's faults with loving kindness, not with abuse."

"A fig for his love! He's not worth a fig, the ugly fellow!" retorted Mrs. Ekzarkhatova. "If I had known how it would be I would never have come—you and he are as thick as thieves!" she cried as she went out.

Pyotr Mikhailich chuckled, saying to himself:

"Fiery woman! Very fiery woman! She's quite ruined her man. And such an exceptional chap. Too bad!"

Passing through the streets on his way home, Pyotr Mikhailich was always very glad if he ran into any country gentleman of his acquaintance who happened to be in the town for a short time.

"Wait a minute!" he would cry.

The country gentleman would stop.

"How long are you here for?"

"Till tomorrow."

"Are you invited anywhere for dinner?"

"No, I haven't seen anyone yet."

"Then come and take pot luck with us. I shall be very angry if you don't—ever so angry! We haven't met for a whole year."

"Thanks, I will, since you are so kind. I'm just going to the Court House."

"Very good, that's what I like—that shows a friendly spirit. Good-bye till then," Pyotr Mikhailich would reply.

Pelageya Evgrafovna was always protesting against his habit of inviting everyone to dinner.

"Well, Commander! What have we for dinner today?" he would ask when he got home.

"Don't worry, you won't be hungry."

"Good! I've invited a man. . . ."

"Why can't you ever tell me beforehand, Pyotr Mikhailich, and why are you forever inviting people? We're always running short of supplies!"

"None of your scolding, Commander! The man who grudges a bite to a friend is a miser."

Pelageya Evgrafovna was no more stingy than he was, really, but she did not like being, as she said, *caught unawares*. In addition to chance visitors Pyotr Mikhailich had one daily guest—his own brother, retired Captain Flegont Mikhailich Godnev. The Captain was a bachelor with a pension of a hundred silver rubles and he had two small rooms almost next door. Unlike the garrulous and sociable Pyotr Mikhailich, the Captain was extremely taciturn, only speaking when he was spoken to, and then for the greater part in monosyllables. He was very fond of birds, and kept nearly a hundred of different varieties. He was fond of shooting and fishing, but the main object of his affections was his pointer Dianka. He was never parted from her, let her sleep on his bed, washed her, watched her for hours as she lay stretched out under the table, and always ended up by chuckling.

"What are you laughing at, Captain?" Pyotr Mikhailich would ask him. He always called his brother Captain.

"I was only looking at Dianka—she's asleep."

The Captain always wore his uniform. He was a great smoker, preferring strong Turkish tobacco which he carried about in a beaded pouch together with a short meerschaum. This pouch had been embroidered for him by Nastenka and, at his own request, showed a Cossack killing a Turk on one side, and the Fortress of Varna on the

other. Every day, exactly half an hour before the return of Pyotr Mikhailich, the Captain would appear, bow to Nastenka, kiss her hand, and inquire after her health, and then sit down without another word.

"Why don't you smoke?" Nastenka would say, by way of drawing him out.

"I'm just going to," replied the Captain and he filled his short pipe, struck a light from a tinder-box of his own fabrication, made from thick sugar-loaf paper, and began smoking.

"Good day to you, Captain!" Pyotr Mikhailich would say as he came into the room.

The Captain would rise and bow respectfully. This bow alone would have been enough to show the deep respect he felt for his brother. At table, when there were no visitors, Pyotr Mikhailich was the only one who talked. Nastenka scarcely said a word and ate very little; the Captain said nothing at all and ate a great deal; Pelageya Evgrafovna kept jumping up from her seat. After dinner the following conversation almost always took place between the brothers:

"Whither do you intend wending your way? To see your birds, I suppose," said Pyotr Mikhailich when the Captain, having finished smoking, picked up his cap.

"Why yes, I must go and see them," the other replied.

"God speed! Will you be coming tonight?"

"I will," the Captain replied as he went out, and in the evening there he was again with his usual accessories—his pouch, his pipe, and Dianka.

After evening tea there would be reading aloud. The Captain gave the preference to historical and military works; but he listened to whatever was read with equal attention, and if Dianka whined in her sleep, scratched violently at her ear with her claws, or thumped the floor with her tail from pure joy, he shook his finger admonishingly at her and murmured: "*Couchel!*"

On church holidays the life of the Godnevs assumed a somewhat different character. Pyotr Mikhailich, in his everyday jacket and ancient cap, usually attended morning service in the parish church, where Flegont Mikhailich also put in an appearance. After the service the brothers parted, each going to his home. Pyotr Mikhailich accompanied Nastenka to mass, wearing a new overcoat and hat and his uniform. The Captain too turned up in uniform. When the service was over the brothers approached to kiss the cross, then embraced one another and exchanged the compliments of the season. Then the Captain went up to Nastenka to inquire after her health and wish her the compliments of the season. From the church the whole family went home, where Pelageya Evgrafovna had coffee ready for them. On holidays Pyotr Mikhailich was more tranquil and cheerful than ever.

"Would you be so kind, our beloved brother, as to lend me your pipe and tobacco pouch?" he asked, while drinking his coffee. He only drank coffee once a week and invariably smoked a single pipe after it.

His brother's request never failed to afford the Captain immense pleasure. He blew assiduously in the stem of the pipe, filled the bowl neatly with tobacco and, laying down the tinder-box, handed the pipe to Pyotr Mikhailich, in return for which his brother kissed him.

The news of Godnev's resignation caused astonishment in the town.

"Have you sent in your resignation, Pyotr Mikhailich?" people asked him.

"Yes, Sir," he replied.

"What made you do that?"

"Why shouldn't I? I've had my day, I've worked enough."

"You would have had double pay if you had waited."

"What do I want with double pay? Thank God I have enough to eat—I'll manage somehow."

II

From the preceding chapter the reader is fully entitled to conclude that peace and tranquillity and the divine blessing prevailed in the family I have described, and that all its members were as happy as possible. Thus it would appear, and thus it would in reality have been, had not a certain young person, my future heroine, Nastenka, been involved. That very same police superintendent's wife who had put such an unfavourable interpretation on the relations between Pyotr Mikhailich and Pelageya Evgrafovna, said of Nastenka:

"Good Lord! Was there ever such a plain girl as that unfortunate Nastenka Godneva?"

"Why do you call her plain? I think she's a sweet girl," her husband ventured to object.

"Very sweet!" repeated his wife ironically, flushing as if from a profound insult.

"Why, what's wrong?" said her husband, more to himself than to his wife.

"Very sweet!" reiterated his wife, and there was a hissing sound in her voice. "Mixes up all the dance steps, and you should just hear her French: '*Je ne voo pas, je ne poo pas*'!"

"They're not rich people. They had no money for governesses," remarked her husband daringly.

His wife gazed steadily at him for several minutes, as if taking the measure of his features and wondering what she should do with them, and at last, with an obvious effort at self-control, exclaimed:

"What are you doing in the drawing-room? Get out! Stay in your study all day and don't dare to stick your ugly nose here!"

The police superintendent merely shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

"Setting himself up for a philosopher, the fool! And he

dares to argue!" cried his wife. "Muzhiks' daughters have no money for governesses either, and that's why they remain as they are."

It is scarcely necessary to state that the unfavourable opinion of the police superintendent's wife was utterly unjust. Nastenka was decidedly good-looking. She was not tall, very slight, a typical brunette with luxurious black hair; she had a habit of raising her great black eyes, which were like two ripe cherries, and this gave her a somewhat sentimental expression. In a word, she had as pretty a little face as ever seen!

As for her education, I shall have to make a slight digression here. Nastenka was in the full sense of the word what is called a *provincial young lady*. . . . But the reader is implored not to confuse her with the present-day provincial young lady. There is an enormous difference between the two. I myself, for example, am by no means an old man, indeed just entering upon the respectable age of forty, but alas, despite the researches which I have been carrying out for the last fifteen years, I have met none of those sweet provincial damsels to whom my first feelings of love were dedicated, with whom I shed bitter tears over *Amalat Bek*, and capped quotations from *Yevgeni Onegin*; in whose albums I wrote:

*I will not say, I will not breathe
The eternal secret in my soul.*

In those, my youthful days, trivial gossip went the round in every small town, in every hamlet, to the effect that some Annochka Savinova was madly in love—oh, horrors!—with Ananyin, a married man, and that her mother had had to take her to Moscow, to the waters, to cure her of this unfortunate passion; and Katenka Makarova was so far from indifferent to a certain lieutenant of the Carabineers that even at a ball she had been un-

able to conceal her feelings, and had never taken her eyes off him the whole evening. Almost every young lady in those days—of this I am certain—preserved in some secret drawer notebooks full of poetry, and full of grammatical errors, too, of course, but very conscientiously written out in her own hand. In the endless mazes of the mazurka a young lady and her partner discussed their emotions, becoming so absorbed that they did not even notice when it was over, or that everyone had long ago gone to supper. There is nothing of all this in the provincial young ladies of the present time. Good heavens, how rational, how discreet they are, how infinitely more accustomed than those bygone young ladies to the restrictions of the corset! How energetically, if not very expressively, they play the piano! How correct is their French! How gracefully they dance! But fear not, these will not dance themselves into a state of oblivion. If you speak to them of feelings (the author has done this with a purpose), believe me they will not respond, either because they do not understand, or because they consider it improper. Should you ask a present-day provincial young lady if she likes music, she will answer: "Yes," and play you two or three polkas. Another, perhaps, will sing something from *Norma*, but if you should ask them to sing and play for you some Russian song or drawing-room ballad which is a little old-fashioned, but which you love for its spirituality, they will merely make a face and rise from the piano stool. The author once expressed, in a company of country maidens, the opinion that for a girl to dream in the moonlight did credit to her heart—all the young ladies laughed, all cried in one voice: "Dream? How silly!" Our great Pushkin, destined, one would think, to be the favourite of women for all time, Pushkin, whose poetry the young ladies of my time knew almost by heart, for whom Tatyana was an ideal—why, the young ladies of today hardly know him, though they have devoured hundreds of

volumes of Dumas and Paul Féval. And why is this, you ask? Simply because these authors describe the court, the magnificent drawing-rooms of the heroines, and their splendid equipages. If I chanced to observe something in the nature of love in the breasts of modern young ladies, this love was always directed at some brilliant *parti*. And the more brilliant the *parti*, the greater the passion. It may be confidently asserted that the young ladies of by-gone days suffered when they loved, and that those of the present-day suffer when their papas have not sufficient means. Formerly a young girl was ready to flee with the poor but noble Waldemar; now there is no fleeing any more, but the author has seen, with an aching heart, scores of examples of seventeen-year-old girls employing all their coquetry to capture some wealthy oldster. Formerly the maiden's dream was a demi-god, now he is a future general or the possessor of five hundred souls. There is not a trace left of the dreaminess, the sensibility which the kindly Karamzin once did so much to make popular. Vanity and again vanity, outward brilliancy and inward hollowness have eaten into youthful hearts. Modern young ladies are ready to undergo all sorts of conubial tortures for the sake of a carriage on horizontal springs, a velvet mantle trimmed with swan's-down, diamond slave bracelets.

My heroine was not such a one. Clever, of a sweet disposition, perhaps rather sentimental and sensitive, she used to sit in a chair all huddled up, did not know how to waltz to two-time, could not play the piano and said: "*Je ne voo pas, je ne poo pas.*" What would you? She never had a French governess to initiate her into these mysteries. She was not sent to boarding-school, where she would have been taught to hold herself straight and to curtsy. She never even had a practical auntie or older sister to cultivate her appearance and, in the words of Gogol, to cram her with all sorts of woman's tricks.

After his wife died Pyotr Mikhailich, who could not bring himself to part with Nastenka, had her brought up at home. As a child she had been a regular tomboy, running about the garden all day, digging in the sand, sunburnt as only brunettes can be, feeding the geese on the bank of the stream, and even playing horses with common boys. The beggar woman who frequented the yard of Pyotr Mikhailich's house used to say:

"What a tomboy! Just you wait, I'll put her in my sack and take her away!"

Nastenka blushed, but did not allow herself to be put out of countenance, and stared boldly into the old woman's face. Of course she never obeyed Pelageya Evgrafovna of whom she was not a bit afraid.

The housekeeper was horrified at the sight of her soiled dress and torn boots.

"Just look at that dress from Petersburg! You won't get another like that in a hurry. . . . I'll tell your Pa, Nastasia Petrovna!" she threatened.

"Papa won't say anything," retorted Nastenka and ran to her father herself.

"Look what a scarecrow I am, Papa," she said.

"Nice little savage," he replied. (Pyotr Mikhailich called his daughter "little savage" on account of her wild ways and dusky complexion.)

Nastenka jumped on to his knees, kissed him, lay down on the sofa beside him and fell fast asleep. The old man would sit for hours without moving so as not to wake her, would gaze at her for hours, never taking his eyes off her, and then, lifting her up tenderly, put her to bed.

"How much pleasure we should have shared if the dear departed had lived!" he said to himself with tears in his eyes, and went into his study, where he stayed for a long time. . . .

When Pelageya Evgrafovna accused Pyotr Mikhailich of spoiling Nastenka, he usually replied, "To forbid a

child to gambol means to poison the best moments of life and darken the purest, the brightest joys."

Pyotr Mikhailich himself gave Nastenka lessons in writing, the Scriptures, arithmetic and grammar. The child was very quick. With what enthusiasm he showed his friends the well-known axiom, written by her tiny hand in big letters: "America is rich in silver!"

"She'll be a calligrapher, gentlemen, my daughter will be a calligrapher," he would say. He was fond, too, of examining her in the multiplication tables in front of visitors, trying to puzzle her by putting questions in a roundabout way:

"Tell me now, if you can, Nastasia Petrovna—what is nine times two?"

"Eighteen," replied Nastenka, never taken unawares. And the old man was enchanted.

When Nastenka was fourteen she stopped romping in the garden, even stopped playing with dolls, was ashamed to kiss the retired Captain and blushed when ordered to do so by her father, making the Captain blush, too. How was Pyotr Mikhailich to amuse his little savage in the monotonous life he led? Scarcely realizing what he was doing, he taught her his own favourite occupation. No doubt everyone remembers the vast quantities of novels which came out in the thirties in Russia in translations and from the pens of Russian authors, novels on all sorts of subjects, historical novels, novels with a purpose, adventure stories. And then the anthologies, the almanacs and, last but not least, the magazines. Every evening something was read aloud from among all these. At first Nastenka listened with the instinctive curiosity of childhood, but later she began reading aloud to her father, and at last acquired a passion for reading.

Her first appearance in the little circle of society in the provincial town was not a great success. She was eighteen years old when Madame Shevalova, a General's

widow, and an extremely proud and fashionable lady, came to live in the town. Formerly she had lived on her estate, wintering in either Moscow or Petersburg, and now she had come to the provincial town to follow in person the course of the legal proceedings in relation to her estate. She had only one daughter, Mademoiselle Paulina, a young woman who was reported to be extremely clever and well-educated, but had unfortunately a sallow complexion and, it was rumoured, lacked two ribs on one side, a defect which it was almost impossible to discern from her outward appearance. Madame Shevalova was very wealthy and extremely stingy. Having squeezed all that could be squeezed out of her estate, she managed her household herself, counting every kopek spent. It was said that she was so stingy that she grudged food not only to her servants, but even to herself and her daughter, and when there were no visitors the portions served at her table were barely sufficient to satisfy hunger; but for outward brilliance the General's widow grudged nothing. On her arrival in the town she rented the best apartment procurable, entirely upholstered in velvet and plush, with an abundance of gilt-framed pictures and any amount of bronze ornaments. She always drove about the town with a postilion, though her four horses had a famished look. She kept a *maitre d'hôtel*, and her footmen were never seen out of livery. To crown all, she announced that she would give a dance every thursday throughout the winter.

All the inhabitants of the little town truckled to her, the more that she behaved with extreme arrogance, making the acquaintance of all the officials in the town, but becoming intimate with hardly any of them, openly declaring that she only knew spiritual repose when she saw Count Ivan and his charming family (Count Ivan, a distant relative of hers, was a wealthy landed proprietor with an estate in the environs of the town).

This Madame Shevalova first met Pyotr Mikhailich in quite an informal manner, having gone to him to ask for books from the municipal school library, and when he agreed to do this, she rewarded him by an invitation to her first Thursday, and pressed him to bring his daughter. Nastenka was somewhat alarmed when Pyotr Mikhailich announced to her that they were going to a ball at the house of Madame Shevalova, but she was elated at the idea. For all his inexperience in such matters, Godnev realized that his daughter must show herself for the first time in society as well dressed as possible, and he consulted Pelageya Evgrafovna on this point. Their counsels ended in a decision to buy Nastenka a dress length of the best gauze to be worn over a robe of the best satin procurable. The housekeeper exerted extraordinary efforts and the stuff purchased was changed six or seven times—here a flaw was found in the gauze, there a tiny spot was discovered on the satin. Pelageya Evgrafovna did not venture to make the dress herself, but sought out a serf-dressmaker who sewed for the treasurer's wife, persuaded her to come and work in the house, ensconced her in her own room, and watched every stitch she made. Pelageya Evgrafovna, who intended to place round Nastenka's neck her late mother's pearl necklace with a diamond clasp, spent half the day restringing, cleaning, washing, and sorting the pearls. A true German, Pelageya Evgrafovna was a skilled cook but knew nothing about clothes. The gauze she chose, though of the best quality, was a florid pink. And the serf-dressmaker copied the fashion too slavishly, and made the peak of the bodice over the skirt too deep. The refurbished pearl necklace was of course of some value, but even it was a little clumsy.

These defects were perceived neither by Nastenka, oppressed as she was by vague fears, nor by Pelageya Evgrafovna herself, who dressed her charge to the best of her understanding and ability, and certainly not by

Pyotr Mikhailich, who knew nothing whatever about the subtleties of feminine toilet, Pyotr Mikhailich donned his new uniform, a white waistcoat with shining brass buttons, and a white tie, the costume he usually wore for Holy Communion and Sunday mass. When Nastenka appeared, fully attired, he exclaimed:

"Oh, what a queen! *Bene, optime!* Turn your head, now ... good ... very good.... Commander—our Nastenka is quite a beauty!"

"Stop that, now, don't interfere, keep back! You're in the light, I can't see a thing!" cried the housekeeper in staccato phrases, carefully setting Nastenka's dress to rights and shaking out the folds.

Pyotr Mikhailich entered the brilliantly illuminated ball-room of the General's widow, where a few guests were already assembled, leading his daughter by the hand. In these moments he presented a spectacle which was both quaint and charming, and at the same time a little ridiculous. He stepped out proudly, obviously convinced that his Nastenka was the best of all. His calm, complacent expression showed how far he was from the thought that the small and slightly built Nastenka was quite outshone by the imposing appearance of the eldest daughter of Count Ivan, an eighteen-year-old girl of striking beauty, or that the sharp-tongued police superintendent's lady, seated in the ball-room, was saying to her meek spouse, who sat mournfully at her side:

"My congratulations! Black beetles in cranberry sauce are now appearing at fashionable routs, I observe."

In the drawing-room Pyotr Mikhailich went up to the hostess, who was reclining on a corner sofa.

"Allow me to introduce my daughter to you, Your Excellency," he said, bowing and scraping.

"*Charmée!*" said Madame Shevalova, rolling her eyes with a slight bend of her head.

Nastenka sat down in an arm-chair at a little distance.

Madame Shevalova turned her head languidly towards her and fixed her dim grey eyes on her for a few moments. Nastenka thought she was going to address her, but the lady said not a word and remarked, turning her head in another direction, where the wife of the dealer in vodka licences sat, stiff as a ramrod, and all decked out in diamonds:

"I do like your bracelet! *Combien l'avez-vous payé?*"

"I don't know, Your Excellency, it was a present from my husband," replied the lady, flushing with pleasure at the attention paid to her.

Mademoiselle Paulina, who had only just finished dressing, now came into the room. She went straight up to her mother and kissed her hand.

"*Qui est cette jeune personne?*" she asked, glancing with narrowed eyes towards Nastenka.

Her mother made no reply, merely closed her eyes and smiled.

Nastenka was both intelligent and sensitive. She had noticed all this, had understood it all perfectly—and she flushed. The dancing began. There were not many male partners, and they all danced either with the daughter of the hostess or other girls of their acquaintance. No one invited Nastenka to dance. That in itself would have been nothing, but she was threatened by something still more disagreeable. Among the guests was a certain Mediokritsky, a senior clerk and a great favourite of the police superintendent's wife, who had recommended him to the General's widow to draw up certain documents and look after her case, and whom therefore the General's widow reluctantly admitted to her parties, where he usually limited his activities to drawing on a pair of kid gloves and tugging at his waistcoat. This time, however, Mediokritsky, seeing that Miss Godneva sat unnoticed in her chair and never danced, decided that this was just the lady for him. Determined to ask her to dance, he went

up to Nastenka, bowed, scraped, and invited her for the quadrille. She understood, of course, that the very invitation from such a partner was a fresh humiliation for her, but consented without showing her feelings. From the very first it was obvious that Mediokritsky had not the faintest idea of inviting anyone to be their vis-à-vis. This was at once observed by Mademoiselle Paulina who immediately set it right, crossing over to them and standing opposite with her partner, a Hussar on leave, to whom she said something in an undertone. The Hussar merely shrugged his shoulders, saying: "*Oh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" It then became clear that the young clerk, who had learned the French quadrille by himself, chiefly from the observation of others, did not know the steps and kept making mistakes, while in the fifth-figure, which was the most difficult, he got into a perfect muddle. He said not one word to his partner, merely glancing at her with a patronizing smile every now and then. When the quadrille was over, he suddenly said: "And the next, please!" Nastenka's head was going round. But though she felt more like crying, she overcame her feelings and consented. When they stood up again, a mocking smile passed over many faces. Mediokritsky behaved as before: he uttered not a word throughout the quadrille, and when it was over, said: "And the next, please!" Knowing nothing of ball-room customs, it never occurred to him that it was not the thing in society to dance with one lady the whole evening.

Nastenka could no longer control her feelings. On the plea of a headache she left her officious cavalier abruptly, and went up to her father, who was sitting near a card table with all the appearance of innocent satisfaction. When he caught sight of Nastenka he was quite alarmed, so pale was she.

"What's the matter with you, my darling?" he inquired anxiously.

"Take me home—I feel faint," replied Nastenka.

"Certainly, certainly. How delicate you are!" said the old man, rising. "Excuse me, Your Excellency," he said, as they passed the drawing-room. "My little girl doesn't feel well."

Once home Nastenka fairly tore off her ball dress and flung herself on her bed. The next morning she awoke with eyelids swollen from weeping, and vowed never again to go anywhere. Reading became her only form of amusement. She read whatever came her way. At last she seemed to have exhausted all Russian books. Nastenka told her father she would like to learn French. The old man who knew the language well but had an atrocious pronunciation, undertook to be her teacher. Nastenka studied day and night and by the end of six months could read with fair fluency. This of course helped to form and develop her mentally, but at the same time it acted as a great stimulus to her imagination. She began to live in a kind of fantastic world, peopled by Homers, Horaces, Onegin, and the heroes of the French Revolution. She could only conceive of the love of woman as an emotion founded exclusively on self-sacrifice, of life in high society as a form of torture, of public opinion as something too trivial to be worthy of attention. The atmosphere in which she lived became intolerable to her. Pyotr Mikhailich, so good-humoured and complacent, began to irritate her, not only when he praised any of the inhabitants of the town, or related some passing event there, but even when he enjoyed his dinner; in a word, she became a petty tyrant over herself, her father and the rest of the household, and fresh eccentricities displayed themselves in her with every day. For instance, she suddenly took a fancy to riding, and insisted on a saddle being bought for her, and although their horse was not accustomed to be ridden and she had never been in the saddle before, she immediately plunged into

a gallop, so that Pyotr Mikhailich almost died of fright. But she got back safe and sound, though pale and trembling. Another time she took it into her head to make a pilgrimage of over thirty versts on foot, after which she was indisposed for a fortnight.

Pyotr Mikhailich, who still regarded his daughter as almost a child, attributed all these whims and oddities to nerves and was firmly convinced that a course of bathing in the summer would cure her of them, at the same time noting ecstatically that Nastenka was acquiring fresh knowledge with every day, or, as he put it, "widening her intellectual horizon."

"How bright you are! If you were a boy you would be a poet, I'm sure of it," said the old man.

The words made his daughter blush, for she *was* a poet and almost every day, in the utmost secrecy, wrote verses.

Thus the time passed. By now Nastenka was over twenty and had no suitors, or at least only one. The despised Mediokritsky, after the ball at the house of the General's widow, suddenly started calling on Pyotr Mikhailich every evening with his guitar, after a decent interval invariably asking permission to sing and play something. The old man received and listened to him with his usual indulgence. Mediokritsky, fixing a tender glance on Nastenka, almost always began with the following verse:

*Thru mist and murk I swim,
Till 'gainst a treach'rous rock
My unwept head I knock.*

All this was brought to a head by the police superintendent's wife calling quite unexpectedly one morning with a proposal from her favourite for the hand of Nastenka. Pyotr Mikhailich laughed.

"Thanking you humbly for your trouble, Maria Iva-

novna, and Mr. Mediokritsky for the honour," he said, "but my daughter is still young."

The lady's lips twitched—she never could stand resistance and in this case she had not expected any.

"That's usually said as a mere formality, Pyotr Mikhailich," she objected. "It's not my business, of course, but in my opinion the young man is a very good match for Nastenka. He may be poor, but poverty is no crime."

Pyotr Mikhailich was somewhat annoyed.

"Certainly poverty is no crime," he said in his turn, "and it is not because he is poor that we cannot accept Mr. Mediokritsky's offer, but because he is quite an uneducated man, and, according to what I hear, has certain undesirable tendencies."

"As far as I can see both suitor and lady have had the same education," said Maria Ivanovna scornfully.

Nastenka, who was a witness of this scene, could not control herself:

"Your own daughter is of marriageable age, Maria Ivanovna," she burst out. "If you like Mediokritsky so much, why don't you marry your daughter to him?"

"No, thank you, he wouldn't do as a suitor for my daughter," declared the police superintendent's lady.

"Then why do you think he would do for me?" asked Nastenka proudly, blushing all over her face.

"Why, good heavens!" exclaimed the lady. "I didn't think about it, I simply fulfilled the urgent request of the young man. He may have had some right to make it, and have been given some sort of hope—I know nothing about that."

Nastenka flew into a rage: tears came into her eyes.

"It was probably you, and not I, who gave him hope, and I would ask you not to trouble yourself about me, and to relieve me of your match-making with regard to anyone whatever," she said in agitated tones, rushing violently out of the room.

The police superintendent's lady looked after her mockingly.

"And is your reply the same, Pyotr Mikhailich?" she asked.

"Precisely the same, Maria Ivanovna!" answered Pyotr Mikhailich. "And I can only deeply regret that you took upon yourself a proposal so offensive to us."

"I, of course, regret it still more; one should really be very careful in such cases and understand the people one has to deal with," said the police superintendent's lady, tying her hat strings convulsively and putting on her dyed boa, preparatory to a hasty departure.

Pyotr Mikhailich delivered her to the care of the footman and went back to his daughter, who sat weeping in her room.

"Nastenka, you crying? What's this? You should be ashamed of yourself! Such weakness!"

"It's terrible, Papa. Next time she'll come with an offer from her footman. She ought to be turned out of the house!"

"Now, now, that'll do! How impulsive you are! Letting yourself be vexed by such nonsense! Why not take a book and read?" said the old man.

But Nastenka was unable to read.

This event represented a final breach with the petty provincial world. Hereafter Nastenka went nowhere, only meeting acquaintances in church, or on the town ramparts, where she sometimes strolled on summer evenings with her father, or in her own house. She never bowed first, and even when spoken to, either said nothing, or replied in monosyllables, as if grudging every word.

III

One evening some three weeks after the order sanctioning his resignation had been issued, Pyotr Mikhailich, much to the delight of the Captain, was reading

aloud Danilevsky's history of the war of 1812, while Nastenka sat by the window gazing pensively at a woodland glade flooded with pale moonlight. The school porter Gavrilich came to the door and could be heard arguing about something with the housemaid who was sitting in the entrance-hall.

"What are you doing there?" cried Pyotr Mikhailich.

"A visitor," replied Grater, thrusting his pock-marked countenance in at the half-open door. "The new inspector has come, he has ordered the teachers to be at his room at nine tomorrow morning, uniform compulsory."

"Aha, so that's it! He must be a very strict fellow. That's in your line, Captain, isn't it? Quite the military way!" declared Pyotr Mikhailich, turning to his brother.

"Precisely so," replied the latter significantly.

"Where is the new inspector staying?" continued Pyotr Mikhailich.

"At One-Thumb's Inn," replied Grater as if it annoyed him.

"And have you been to see him?"

"No. Why should I? Afonka's wife came running to say they must all be there at nine, uniform compulsory, that's all."

"Go and tell them, then."

"I shan't go today. There'd be no rousing them—too late. I'll make the rounds tomorrow."

"That's true. But mind you're not late! And tell the teachers to see that their uniforms are in order and come to me first—we'll all go together. And shave yourself, and put away your felt boots—above all, don't heat up that cabbage soup of yours! Mind what I say now!"

"Always at me about my soup! You can't talk about anything else," grumbled the invalid and went out, banging the door angrily.

Pyotr Mikhailich looked after him, laughing.

This time, however, Gavrilich fulfilled the task imposed on him with unusual alacrity, and before daybreak had made the round of the teachers, who gathered at the house of Pyotr Mikhailich by seven. They were all more or less oppressed by a certain fear and anxiety. Their company, however, was not quite complete, consisting only of our friend Ekzerkhatov, the history teacher, and Lebedev, the teacher of mathematics, a man about six feet tall, almost always unkempt and unshaven, and the possessor of a deep bass voice and a ferocious appearance, which was in perfect accord with his violent passion for hunting; he was the best marksman in the gubernia, and an expert bear hunter, having shot down more than thirty bears in his time. Their mutual passion for hunting had brought about a close friendship between Lebedev and the Captain. Rumyantsev, the teacher of literature, joined them later. Unlike Lebedev he was a short, slight young man, exceedingly timid and therefore of an accommodating nature, and at the same time a great talker and very fond of clothes, wearing his hair *à la coque*, and waved over the temples. He had dressed for the occasion in what he considered an extremely fashionable coat and a coloured scarf, tied in an enormous bow, but on the advice of Pyotr Mikhailich had instantly rushed home and changed into his uniform.

Pyotr Mikhailich, too, was in dress uniform.

"Well, here we are, and all dressed for parade. Come now! A fine set of fellows!" he said. "But you ought to have had your hair cut, Vladimir Antipich. Look how it sticks out!" (This to the teacher of mathematics.)

"It grows so fast, damn it! I can't think why. Last night, I admit, I was out shooting woodcock, and had no time to get it cut," replied Lebedev, smoothing his hair.

"I see," said Pyotr Mikhailich sympathetically, and turned to Rumyantsev. "Well, Ivan Petrovich, old fellow, how are you?"

"I'm all right! Mama went on at me not to talk too much to the new chief. 'He doesn't know you, Vanyushka,' she said, 'perhaps he wouldn't like it.' She told me I might say something I didn't mean to, and then I could never take it back," explained the teacher of literature innocently.

"Quite right, quite right," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich. And chanting in tragicomic tones: "The time to say farewell has come!" he continued with feeling. "I hope with all my heart, gentlemen, that your new chief will take to you. For my part I was always pleased with you and will recommend you in the most favourable light."

"We would like to work with you for ever, Pyotr Mikhailich," said Lebedev.

"That we would," declaimed Rumyantsev, raising his eyes to the ceiling. "I haven't been here long, but I tell everyone that I came here without so much as a penny for a cab-driver, or a single decent suit of clothes, and owe everything to your kindness."

Ekzarkhatov said nothing, merely heaved a deep sigh.

These avowals were evidently greatly to the taste of the old man.

"Thank you for your kind opinion of me," he replied. "I know that I, too, was sometimes very exacting, that I made it hot for you. It may be I have wronged some of you. Don't hold it against me!"

"We have never known anything but kindness from you," exclaimed Lebedev.

"It was only paternal admonitions on your part," added Rumyantsev.

Pyotr Mikhailich was quite overcome.

"I am very, very grateful to you, my friends! Believe me that, though I cannot now express myself, I feel it all. God send that everything may go as well and harmoniously under your new chief!"

With these words he endeavoured to wink away the tears gathering in his eyes.

Ekzarkhatov, his head bending lower and lower, suddenly broke out into loud sobs and fled to a corner to hide his emotion.

"Now, now! What's all this? You ought to be ashamed! It's all very well for me, I'm an old man! Stop it!" said Pyotr Mikhailich, scarcely able to restrain his own sobs. "Let us proceed in peace," he concluded solemnly, and marched ahead of his subordinates.

Our learned friends were met in the yard of One-Thumb's Inn by the innkeeper's wife, a portly dame in a cotton sarafan. She was struggling under the weight of a huge tub of garbage which she held by the handles, but she immediately stopped and bowed, saying:

"Good day, Sirs, good day."

"Tell Mr. Kalinovich, my good woman, that the teachers have come to introduce themselves," Pyotr Mikhailich said to her.

"In a minute, Sirs, I'll send my lad to him this minute, and you please go and wait in the sitting-room. He said you were to wait in the sitting-room."

Pyotr Mikhailich and the teachers went into the sitting-room, where they found the door into the next room firmly closed. They waited about a quarter of an hour, when the door at last opened and Kalinovich came out. He was a tall, extremely lean man, with a clever, sallow countenance. He too was in a brand-new uniform (not, it is true, of very fine cloth), with a waistcoat of dazzling white piqué, and a sword, and he held a small three-cornered hat in his hand.

"Allow me to introduce myself," began Pyotr Mikhailich, "your predecessor, Collegiate Assessor Godnev."

Kalinovich gave him the tips of his fingers.

"Allow me to introduce the teachers," added the old man.

Kalinovich gave a slight bow.

"Mr. Ekzarkhatov, the teacher of history," continued Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Where did you study?" asked Kalinovich.

"Moscow University, philological faculty," Ekzarkhatov replied in mournful tones.

"Did you graduate?"

"I left after the second course."

"Knows his subject perfectly—deserves a professorship for his knowledge," interpolated Godnev. "You may even have been university acquaintances. According to your ages you should have been there together."

"There were so many of us," retorted Kalinovich.

Ekzarkhatov glanced up at him for a moment, and looked away quickly. He remembered Kalinovich perfectly, for they had been in the same class and had sat for two years on the same bench. But apparently it suited the latter to forget his former comrade.

"Mr. Lebedev, teacher of mathematics," continued Godnev.

"Where did you study?" asked Kalinovich again.

"I have been engaged in private surveying," replied Lebedev laconically.

Kalinovich transferred his glance to Rumyantsev who, not waiting for the question, and standing with his hands to his trouser seams, rattled out:

"Brought up in Moscow Orphanage, at first gave private music lessons, but, having a family to provide for, desired to enter the service of the State."

"All our teachers are distinguished for their knowledge, their morality and their zeal," put in Pyotr Mikhailich.

Kalinovich smiled faintly, and this did not escape the notice of the old man.

"In speaking thus," he continued, "I take no credit to myself. My day is over. I seek nothing for myself, it

is for them I speak, in the hope that you will be so kind as to afford them your protection. You are new here—your recommendation to the higher authorities will be of the greatest importance for them.”

“I shall regard it as my pleasing duty,” said Kalinovich and added, turning to Pyotr Mikhailich: “Won’t you sit down?” He then bestowed upon the teachers the kind of bow with which a chief gives his subordinates to understand that they may go. But the teachers, not understanding him immediately, did not budge.

“I will not keep you, gentlemen,” said Kalinovich.

Ekzarkhatov went out first, and after him the other two, though Rumyantsev stood for a moment in the doorway to make a profound obeisance. Pyotr Mikhailich frowned. He was greatly displeased that his successor had not only shown no kindness to the teachers, but had not even asked them to sit down. He made as if to go himself, but Kalinovich again asked him to take a seat, even drawing up a chair for him.

“They are all very nice people,” said the old man again, sitting down.

Kalinovich appeared not to have heard him and asked, after a pause:

“Is there any good society here?”

“Oh yes. The officials here are splendid people, and live in the utmost harmony with one another. There is no quarrelling or backbiting among us. This town has long been renowned for its friendliness.”

“And is there much entertaining?”

“Oh yes. They visit one another occasionally, and have a good time.”

“Could you name me a few persons?”

“Certainly. But who is it you particularly wish to know?”

“Is there a mayor?”

"Certainly. Feofilakt Semyonich Kuchеров, a veteran of 1812, a most estimable old man."

"Has he a family?"

"He has a very big family."

"Who else?"

"Next comes the superintendent of police, and his wife, I suppose. Then there is our lawyer—quite a young man, still a bachelor, but he's soon going to marry the daughter of the mayor."

"Is there a postmaster?"

"Naturally there's a postmaster, but he's an old man like me, and inclined to stay at home."

"Those are all officials. What about landed proprietors?" asked Kalinovich.

"The only landed proprietor who lives here permanently is Madame Shevalova, a General's widow."

"Wealthy?"

"Oh yes—they say she's a millionnaress and, I must tell you, she's a regular General's wife. They call her the lady governor here."

"Is she still a young woman?"

"No, she's old, she has a daughter getting on in years—unmarried."

"Kindly inform me," said Kalinovich after a short silence, "are there any *droshkies* to be had?"

"You are probably alluding to cabs for hire, and there aren't any," replied Pyotr Mikhailich. "There's no need for them. And so, according to the law of political economy with which you are doubtless acquainted, where there is no demand there will be no supply."

Kalinovich seemed to be meditating.

"That's rather annoying. I intended to make a few visits today," he said.

"If that is so, you have no need to worry," rejoined Pyotr Mikhailich. "Allow me, by way of marking our acquaintance, to offer you my carriage. My horse is an ex-

cellent one, and the carriage, though not of a fashionable make, is very good. Many landed proprietors use it when they are in town."

"You would vastly oblige me. But I feel a bit awkward..."

"Always glad to lend a helping hand."

"Many thanks."

"I thank you. But I have one little condition, my dear Sir—whoever uses my horse is bound to taste of my bread and salt, to dine with me. That's the fee I exact."

"A most agreeable fee," replied Kalinovich, smiling. "But I'm afraid I may keep you waiting."

"Dispose of your time as seems best to you," replied Pyotr Mikhailich, getting up. "Till our next happy meeting," he added, bowing and scraping.

Kalinovich gave him his whole hand and courteously saw him as far as the front door.

All the way home the old man was unusually thoughtful, every now and then uttering brief exclamations.

"Ah, youth, youth! You have brains, perhaps more than we old fellows have, but you haven't much heart," he said, ascending the steps of his porch, and immediately, according to his invariable custom, he informed Peiaga Evgrafovna that there would be a guest for dinner.

"I know all about it," she said, and ran down to the cellar.

Having changed his clothes and ordered his carriage to be sent to Kalinovich, Pyotr Mikhailich went into the drawing-room to his daughter, kissed her, sat down and again fell to musing.

"Well, Papa, have you seen the new inspector?" asked Nastenka.

"Yes, my darling, I have been so fortunate as to make his acquaintance," replied Pyotr Mikhailich with a half-smile.

"Is he young?"

"Very young. And a dandy. And a clever fellow, you can see. But he seems rather proud. He received our fellows as if he were the Governor himself—condescendingly. That's not nice. It's not a very creditable beginning."

"Well, what if he is conscious of his own dignity? Your teachers are very good people of course, but that's all," protested Nastenka.

"Whatever sort of people they are," reiterated Pyotr Mikhailich in his turn, "he ought not to be proud. There are two sorts of pride—one sort is noble, it is the desire to improve, to be better. This sort of pride is the attribute of great men. It strengthens them in their work, enables them to overcome obstacles and achieve their aims. But the sort of pride which lords it over inferiors—ugh! I despise it! What's it for? That's a stupid, absurd pride."

"Why did you invite him to dinner if he's so stuck-up?" asked Nastenka.

"Because I want to talk to him about the teachers. He must be led to understand them properly," replied Pyotr Mikhailich, wishing to conceal the impulse to hospitality which made him invite all and sundry to dinner, for what reason God alone knows.

"I wouldn't have sent him the carriage, at any rate. Why couldn't he have gone on foot?" remarked Nastenka.

"Stop talking nonsense!" Pyotr Mikhailich interrupted her, now thoroughly annoyed. "It won't hurt the mare, will it? What harm can it do her? He wants to make visits. He can't run about the town on foot."

"Visits! He only arrived yesterday, and wants to make visits today!" exclaimed Nastenka ironically.

"Well, that's nothing to wonder at, is it? That's all right!"

"Shows off in front of the teachers, and hastens to make his obeisances to others the moment he arrives! The man must be a fool!"

"There you go! You're too free in your speech, Nasten-

kal I see nothing stupid in it! He's got to live in the town, and he wants to know everyone."

"Why should he, if he's such a clever man himself?"

"Why not? All the people here are most estimable. What's the meaning of such dislike of people? That's very bad of you, my darling, and a thing I don't like at all. What have they done to you?"

"I don't think anyone wants my love."

"God wants our love, and so does the heart of man. Without love for one's fellows, life in this world is both sad and sinful," uttered the old man solemnly.

Nastenka replied with a contemptuous smile.

Pyotr Mikhailich argued with his daughter frequently and passionately on this subject.

IV

At twelve o'clock Kalinovich, having changed from his uniform into a black frock-coat, a black satin scarf and a black velvet waistcoat, and put on a new overcoat, went out of the house to set off on his visits, but stepped back in amazement at the sight of the carriage which had been sent to him. The horse described so flatteringly by Pyotr Mikhailich was of course, thanks to the unceasing attention of Pelageya Evgrafovna, very well-fed. But its immense puffy head, its drooping ears, its thick shaggy legs, bore eloquent testimony to its respectable age, decrepit state, and docility. The harness, also bought by the housekeeper herself, was distinguished more for its enduring qualities than for elegance. The carriage, with its enormous wheels, high springs, and clumsy driver's seat, belonged to that category of vehicle frequently described as antediluvian. To crown all, the coachman was the hideous Gavrilich, enveloped in a huge grey peasant's coat, with a round grey felt hat jammed over his brows, so that only his bristling moustache and a small part of

his face could be seen. At the sight of Kalinovich, Grater took off his hat and made a bow.

"I suppose you're the footman, aren't you?" asked Kalinovich.

"A soldier, Your Honour, a discharged soldier," replied Grater, bowing again.

"Why is your head shaved if you are the coachman?"

"I'm not a coachman, Your Honour—I look after the school. Pelageya Evgrafovna sent me—their lad is ill. 'Go, Gavrilich,' she said, 'drive the carriage.' So that's it, Your Honour," reported the invalid, bowing a third time. He was obviously trying to ingratiate himself with the new chief.

The young inspector remained some time wondering whether to drive about in this carriage or not. But there was nothing to be done—no other coach was to be had. He pulled a comic face and got in, ordering the coachman to drive him to the mayor, who lived in the Town Hall.

Entering the first room that he came to Kalinovich caught sight through a half-open door of a lady in a bodice and petticoat with her hair down. At his appearance the lady cried out: "Heavens! Who are all these people wandering about?" and disappeared into the inner rooms, strutting like a peacock.

Kalinovich remained alone. He stamped softly on the floor till a chubby housemaid, in a homespun dress and barefoot, came into the room.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Is your master at home?" asked Kalinovich.

The girl stared at him with bulging eyes.

"Olga, you chit! Who are you chattering to, there?" came the voice of the mayor.

The girl went to her master.

"There's a man here. I don't know him," she said.

"But who is he?"

"I never saw him before, Sir. I don't know him."

"Say I'm busy. Tell him to go to the police station. I have no time now," said the mayor.

"He's busy, you're to go to the police station," repeated the girl upon returning.

Kalinovich laughed.

"Be so kind as to give him this card," he said, handing her two visiting cards with the corners turned down.

"For the master?" asked the girl.

"For the master," said Kalinovich and took his departure. "Wild beasts, not human beings!" he said, getting into the carriage, and he resolved not to seek the acquaintance of any of the other officials. But considering that it was too early yet for a formal visit to the General's widow, and catching sight of the name of the post-office on the wall of a house, he gave orders to have himself driven up to the front porch. The postmaster evidently kept himself well barricaded. His was the only door in the whole town which was locked, and had a bell handle on it. Kalinovich rang at least five times, till at last there came to his ears the sound of slow steps on the staircase, a bolt clicked, and a tall, skinny old man with a sodden countenance, in a white knitted nightcap, round spectacles and a long, extremely shabby grey frock-coat, stood in the doorway.

"Is the postmaster at home?" asked Kalinovich.

"I am the postmaster, Sir! What can I do for you?" drawled the old man hoarsely.

Kalinovich explained that he had come to pay him a visit.

"Ah, much obliged to you, Sir! Come in," said the postmaster and led his visitor through a long, chilly hall, on the walls of which hung enormous oil paintings so dim and gloomy that at first glance it was impossible to make out what their subjects were. On almost all the window-sills were pots of densely growing geraniums, emitting a strong, suffocating odour. The next room into

which the host led his visitor was also hung with dark-hued pictures. One corner was almost filled up by an icon stand. A parchment-bound book lay open face down on an unpainted oak table; cunningly wrought ivory crucifix hung on the wall over the table.

The tall, unpainted oak chairs had hard leather cushions. The postmaster motioned to Kalinovich to sit down and gazed at him in silence through his glasses. Kalinovich, too, said not a word.

"I suppose you have seen fit to take the place of Mr. Godnev?" asked the host at last.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich.

"Just so, Sir. You will have a good post. Your predecessor lived in the lap of luxury and acquired a fortune to boot. . . . A good post," he drawled in conclusion.

Kalinovich winced.

"And what post did you fill before?" asked the host after a pause.

"I only graduated from Moscow University two years ago, and have not yet served anywhere."

"You are from Moscow University, are you? I know it, Sir, I know it! A learned institution. Many learned men have had their education there. Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy!" said the postmaster, raising his eyes to heaven.

The ensuing silence lasted for some time.

"Is it long since you left Moscow?" said the postmaster.

"I come straight from there."

"Just so, Sir, just so! That's quite a short time. I should like to know what people say and write there about the new comet to appear on the horizon."

"Oh, that! It's quite a commonplace phenomenon. Its passage has been traced in advance."

"I know, Sir, I know! Our great astronomers can read the starry chart easily, you'd think they were prophets.

Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy!" repeated the old fellow, raising his eyes to heaven and continuing as if to himself: "Great events are preceded by heavenly portents. But however swift the mind of man, it cannot penetrate these mysteries, though we already have many other prophecies."

"What other prophecies have we?" asked Kalinovich, who had begun to find his host interesting.

"We have many prophecies," repeated the latter evasively. "Cities swallowed up by the earth are being excavated, as though to testify to the frailty of all earthly things. I read, Sir, this year in *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* that the English missionaries have got as far as the Ethiopian steppe. . . ."

"It may be so," said Kalinovich.

"Yes, Sir, they have," repeated the postmaster. "And I have been told by a most reliable person that a deformed child has been born in America. Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Much testimony has been offered, Sir, very much, and worst of all the diminution of love," he continued.

Kalinovich looked at the old man with still greater curiosity.

"Do you read a great deal?" he asked.

"No, Sir, very little. There are very few good books nowadays. And my health is very poor. I have been suffering from dropsy of the chest for the last seven years. I have been stricken by grief, Sir. My own son sued me, on the pretext that I concealed and made away with his mother's fortune. Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy!" concluded the postmaster, and fell into profound thought.

Kalinovich rose and took his leave.

"Good-bye, Sir," said his host, also rising. "I am much obliged to you. Your predecessor used to supply me with serious books—I hope you too will not neglect me." he

added, bowing. "The payment for this is supposed to be ten rubles a year. I have not the wherewithal, but if you will be so kind as to oblige me, an impoverished man, for nothing. . . ."

Kalinovich declared his perfect willingness and made off.

"Good-bye, Sir, good-bye. I am much obliged to you," said the old man, seeing him out and banging the door, which he immediately bolted.

The house of the General's widow was, as I have already remarked, the best in the town. There was a flagged pavement all round it, from which the snow was cleared throughout the winter, and sand was scattered over it so that the General's widow and her daughter could stroll there for want of a better place between two and four of a winter afternoon. Voluminous striped muslin curtains were looped over the windows. The inside of the house fully matched its outside. From the spacious entrance there rose a wide carpeted staircase of imitation oak, with flowers on either side. When Kalinovich entered, a footman in a braided livery, with a rather foolish face, assumed a statuesque pose and to the question: "At home?" replied briskly: "Come in, Sir," running ahead to announce the visitor. Kalinovich seized the opportunity to stand in front of a mirror and set his hair and his collar to rights, and buttoned up the last button of his frock-coat, before following the footman.

The General's widow was reclining according to her wont on a corner sofa.

Mademoiselle Paulina sat not far away working at a drawing of a child's head in pencil. Kalinovich introduced himself in French. The General's widow gazed steadily at him with her dim eyes and apparently approved of his appearance, for she asked, with a civil smile:

"Are you one of the landed proprietors hereabouts?"

"No, Ma'am," replied Kalinovich, casting a rapid glance at Paulina, whose sickly countenance and odd-looking figure had struck him immediately.

"You have probably come here on some mission?" went on the lady. She took Kalinovich for a Petersburg official whose arrival at the town was daily expected.

"No, Ma'am, I have come here to work," he replied.

"To work!" exclaimed the General's widow in a tone of astonishment. "What post have you here?" she added.

"I have been appointed inspector of the municipal school."

Mother and daughter exchanged glances.

"What sort of post is that?" asked the widow.

"It's probably the post left vacant by that old man," remarked Paulina.

"That's it," said Kalinovich.

Mother and daughter again exchanged glances. The older lady looked down.

Paulina narrowed her eyes and resumed her drawing. Kalinovich guessed that by revealing his post he had lowered himself in the opinion of his new acquaintances, and realizing with whom he had to deal, he made up his mind to set matters right.

"I have never lived in a district town before," he said, "and know nothing about provincial life."

"It's very dull here," said the General's widow with evident reluctance.

"There isn't much society, it seems."

"It seems so."

"Does it consist of nothing but officials?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"But Your Excellency condescends to live here permanently," remarked Kalinovich.

"I am here to see to my affairs and my health and to be near a doctor. My estate is in the district, I have many relatives and intimate friends here, who come to see

me," said the General's widow and suddenly checked herself, as if afraid she had said too much, and thus lowered her dignity.

"I left Moscow with the utmost regret," went on Kalinovich. "This year, as if to spite me, so many interesting things are going on. Not to mention the living-tableaux which are so splendidly performed, there are so many delightful concerts, and then there is Rubini."

"He wasn't there long, he only gave two or three concerts," remarked Paulina.

"And what sort of concerts were they?" said her mother. "Just fragments.... Moscow always gets the leftovers.... We heard him in Petersburg in grand opera."

"He sang his best arias and Moscow was enthusiastic," declared Kalinovich.

"Moscow! Moscow is always ready to be in ecstasies about anything."

"Just like Petersburg," retorted Kalinovich. "As a matter of fact Moscow seems to me the more discriminating of the two."

"As if they can be compared—Moscow and Petersburg! Petersburg is simply divine, but I can't stand Moscow. We spent several winters there and were bored to death."

"That is Your Excellency's personal opinion," said Kalinovich. "And I will not venture to oppose it."

"No, it's not my personal opinion," replied the lady calmly. "My late husband, who knew all the capitals in Europe, always said—I'm sure you'll remember, Paulina—he had never seen anything to beat Petersburg."

"Have you ever lived in Petersburg?" Paulina asked Kalinovich.

"I've never even been there," he admitted.

Mother and daughter smiled.

"What do you know about it, if you've never been there? I can't understand that," said Paulina.

"Nor can I," agreed her mother.

Kalinovich found nothing more to say.

The two ladies were for ever parading their devotion to Petersburg and their dislike of Moscow. In reality it was the fashionable shops, the well-kept roads and pavements, and the gas lamps, all of which Moscow, as is well known, lacks, that they loved so inordinately. Moreover, during their two winter sojourns in Moscow, the General's widow had given a few balls with a definite purpose, and attended the Assembly Rooms almost every day with her daughter, dressed up to the nines, but neither these confections nor the talents of Mademoiselle Paulina had produced any particular effect—nobody had proposed to her.

For the rest of the call mother and daughter talked to each other about some female cousin from whom they expected a letter, which had, however, not arrived. Kalinovich, unable to take part in this domestic conversation, took his leave.

"Who is he?" asked the mother, when he had gone.

"The school inspector, Mama," replied the daughter.

"The impudence! Appearing all of a sudden and forcing his acquaintance on us! As if I wanted it!"

"His French isn't bad," remarked the daughter.

"Who doesn't speak French nowadays? You can't tell what sort of a person he is by that. He ought to have asked someone to introduce him—at least I should have known who recommended him. It's all the fault of the servants—when will they learn how to behave?" said the General's widow, ringing the bell.

A lean butler entered.

"Who is at the hall-door today?" his mistress asked him.

"Semyon, Your Excellency," replied the latter.

"Send Semyon to me."

Semyon appeared.

"You always do something foolish when you are at the door, Semyonushka. You have so little sense—why can't you think? You admit anybody who calls. Today you let in some gentleman nobody knows anything about, a perfectly unknown person."

"Your Excellency—" began the footman.

"No excuses, now! There are a great many misdemeanours to your account, you will compel me to take decisive measures. Off with you and try to be a little more sensible!"

At the words "decisive measures" the man flushed crimson. The General's widow always addressed her servants gently and kindly. But when she uttered the words "decisive measures," it was rarely indeed that she did not put them into practice.

V

Pelageya Evgrafovna surpassed herself in her efforts to impress the new visitor and seemed to be determined to show him her art in all its brilliance. She got out the best table linen, laundered, of course, till it was as white as snow, and ironed till it was fit to be sent to an exhibition. She even took out the crystal goblets which had formed part of the dowry of Pyotr Mikhailich's late wife, very fine crystal which was only used once or twice a year, on the name days of Pyotr Mikhailich and Nastenka, and for the rest of the time was kept locked up in a special cupboard in the housekeeper's own room, where no one was allowed to lay a finger on it. The dinner, too, promised to be something quite out of the ordinary. The appearance of a huge fork and a maplewood scoop aroused strong suspicions that there was to be boiled sterlet. Pelageya Evgrafovna worried Nastenka to death the whole morning, insisting that she change her everyday dress of unbleached linen for one of black silk; and protest as

Nastenka might, the housekeeper got her way. The old maid had a certain, somewhat remote purpose. When the order for the discharge of Pyotr Mikhailich was issued, he had said to her: "A young inspector has been appointed in my place. If we are fortunate he will be a suitor for Nastenka."

"How nice that would be, oh, how nice!" the housekeeper had replied.

She cherished a great desire to marry off Nastenka as soon as possible, all the more if it was to an inspector, for, supposing them all to be like Pyotr Mikhailich, she was firmly convinced that anyone who was an inspector must be a worthy person.

At two o'clock the Captain made his appearance and sat silently in the drawing-room as usual. Nastenka turned over the pages of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*; Pyotr Mikhailich paced up and down the room, regarding the richly appointed table with satisfaction, and every now and then glancing out of the window.

"Your inspector doesn't seem to be coming, Papa. It's very tedious waiting for him," said Nastenka.

"Wait a bit, my darling, he'll come. He has probably been delayed somewhere," replied Pyotr Mikhailich. "And here he comes!" he exclaimed suddenly.

Nastenka cast a glance of involuntary curiosity out of the window; even the Captain got up to have a look. Grater, making a last effort to ingratiate himself with his new chief, whipped up the mare which, unaccustomed to trotting, fell into a clumsy gallop. The carriage rattled and creaked to such an extent that Grater had difficulty in guiding it into the yard, and nearly ran into one of the gate-posts. Kalinovich, still under the influence of the disagreeable impressions he had carried away from the house of the General's widow, who, as we have seen, had given him such an insulting reception, entered with a darkened countenance.

"Come in, come in, Yakov Vasilich!" said Pyotr Mikhailich, going to meet his guest and leading him into the drawing-room.

"This is my brother, a retired army captain, and this is my daughter Anastasia," he said.

The Captain bowed, scraping the floor with his foot. Nastenka half rose. Kalinovich bestowed a coldly courteous bow upon them.

"Won't you have a little vodka?" continued Pyotr Mikhailich, motioning towards the *hors d'oeuvres*. "Here we have home-brewed cordials, and here are pickled mushrooms of all sorts. And over there are Arkhangelsk herrings, not very big but extremely tasty, I assure you."

"Permit me to smoke, instead," said Kalinovich.

"Why, of course! Captain, it's your turn to play the host. I don't smoke much myself, but my brother is a connoisseur of tobacco."

The Captain began blowing into the stem of his short pipe.

"Thanks—I have my own," said Kalinovich, extracting a cigarette from his case.

The Captain put away his pipe, but struck a light from his home-made tinder-box and offered it to the visitor, whose cigarette case he inspected with deep interest.

"Nice thing—leather, no doubt?" he said.

"No—it's only papier-mâché," replied Kalinovich.

The Captain had no idea what this meant, but he wasn't going to give himself away.

"Ah—English make, no doubt," he said knowingly.

"Afraid I don't know."

"English, I'm sure," repeated the Captain.

He was a great lover of all smoking accessories, and, as his brother had said, considered himself a connoisseur.

"May I ask where you have been, whom you found at home, whose acquaintance you have made?" said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I only visited a few houses, and even this I regret," replied Kalinovich.

"How is that?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich in surprise.

Nastenka gazed fixedly at the young man, and even the Captain glanced at him.

"In the first place," continued Kalinovich, "your mayor would not see me but asked me to go to the police station in the evening."

"Ha-ha!" laughed Pyotr Mikhailich in his good-humoured way. "He's such a queer old chap! He must have misunderstood you. Can't be helped. His post keeps him very busy—and then he is so poor! Our town is not like other places—the mayor does not feather his own nest. He has hardly anything but his salary, and few hundred now and then from the dealer in vodka licences."*

These words brought a scornful smile to Kalinovich's face.

"And he has such a large family!" pursued Pyotr Mikhailich unheedingly. "Two of his boys attend my school—and a sad sight they are. All rags and tatters, you'd never think they were gentleman's sons. Something went wrong with his wife at her last child-birth—I suppose she wasn't careful. The milk rushed to her brain or something—and now she's a bit touched. They say she never washes or brushes her hair, and goes about the house looking like a ghost and scolding everybody. A most miserable state of affairs!" concluded Pyotr Mikhailich in melancholy tones.

The young inspector listened to all this with the utmost indifference.

"The mayor has a very pretty daughter, she's considered a beauty here," remarked Nastenka half ironically. Kalinovich's only reply was to glance at her.

"So she is! Very pretty indeed," put in Pyotr Mikhail-

* I.e., by way of a bribe.—*Tr.*

ich. "And whom else did you visit?" he added, turning to Kalinovich.

"After that I went to the postmaster's—a regular crank."

"A crank—that's exactly what he is," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich. "The old fellow's no fool, he's very pious, but he lives in constant terror of the end of the world. Formerly I used often to argue with him—'It's a sin,' I told him, 'to tempt providence, one must live honestly and virtuously, and leave the rest to God.'"

"He's an awful miser," put in Nastenka.

"How do you know that, my dear?" objected Pyotr Mikhailich. "And supposing he is a miser, in my opinion he harms no one but himself, by depriving himself of all comforts."

"How can you say he harms no one but himself, Papa, when he lends money at interest?" interrupted Nastenka. "He's a usurer. And what about that affair with his son?"

"Well, what about it? Who is to judge between a father and his children? God alone can do that," uttered Pyotr Mikhailich and an expression of severity and disapproval came over his face.

Nastenka changed the subject.

"Did you call on Madame Shevalova, the General's widow?" she asked Kalinovich.

"I did," he replied.

"That's our high society!"

"Evidently."

"And did you see her daughter?"

"I don't know—there was someone there—a young lady or a married woman. She seemed to be lop-sided, or have a crooked neck—hard to say which."

"She goes all down on one side, it's terrible," said Nastenka. "And fancy they give balls—I had the pleasure of being at one. You ought to see her in a ball dress—she looks terrible."

"Young people! Young people!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich. "Do not mock at bodily infirmities! It's as bad as mocking at the sick—it's a sin."

"We weren't mocking," put in Kalinovich, ironically. "On the contrary, she made such a melancholy impression on me that I haven't been able to shake it off yet."

"Dinner's ready," interrupted Pyotr Mikhailich, noticing that a large bowl had been placed on the table. "Won't you take a drop of vodka before dinner?" he asked Kalinovich.

"No, thanks," replied the latter.

"Just as you like! But the Captain and I will have a drop. The vodka hour has struck, Your Excellency—allow me! Drink thou!" said the old man, filling his own silver goblet and handing it to the Captain. But just as the latter was going to take it he withdrew it and drank from it himself. The Captain smiled. . . . Pyotr Mikhailich played this trick on him every day.

"Come, I won't deceive you this time," he went on, and poured out another goblet.

"Good!" said the Captain and drank off his portion at a gulp.

They all went into the dining-room, where Pyotr Mikhailich introduced his new acquaintance to Pelageya Evgrafovna. Kalinovich bowed slightly; the housekeeper made a prim curtsy.

"It appears we are being treated to giblet soup today," said Pyotr Mikhailich, taking his seat and sniffing at the tureen. "Do you like giblet soup?" he asked Kalinovich.

"I don't mind it," replied the other with a somewhat scornful smile, but, after tasting the tripe, he fell to eating it with appetite. "It's very good," he said. "Marvellously cooked!"

"Artistically!" boasted Pyotr Mikhailich. "Pelageya Evgrafovna, honour is due to you—we bow to you and

thank you on behalf of the whole honourable company."

The housekeeper looked down shyly, and for once renounced her habit of leaving the table. After the first course followed the sterlet, to which Kalinovich paid due tribute. He also praised the grouse with special gravy sauce. But most of all, apparently, he liked the cordials, drinking down two glasses, and coming again for a third, at the same time declaring that it was better than any liqueur.

Pelageya Evgrafovna's cheeks were crimson with pleasure.

After dinner they all went back to the drawing-room.

"Tell me something about Moscow University, Yakov Vasilich," began Pyotr Mikhailich. "I hear they have splendid professors there nowadays. Which faculty did you attend?"

"The juridical."

"A fine faculty. I studied at Moscow University myself in the philological faculty, and in my day Merzlyakov enjoyed well-earned renown. What a clear head that was! He would analyze Derzhavin line by line, every word. 'Here's a good line,' he would say, 'but this one is mediocre. This is how he should have put it,' and he would start improvising in verse. We just listened to him, but if anyone had thought of writing down his impromptus, there would have been some exquisite verses," said Pyotr Mikhailich. "I wonder," he continued, after a pause, "if messieurs the present students ever think of Merzlyakov, if they respect him as they should."

"Oh yes, they do," replied Kalinovich, "especially as a professor."

"That does the younger generation credit—such people should not be forgotten," concluded the old man, and he sighed. The glass or two of cordial drunk at table had made him even more garrulous than usual, and put

him into a mood of agreeable melancholy. "Take my own case!" he mused, as if talking to himself. "How I should like to visit Moscow, but I can never scrape the money together, and how I should like to see the white-walled city again, to go to the university. . . . I think they'd let an old student in, if only to look round. Many of my former comrades have become well-known literary men, scholars. In our student days we were friendly, and had many an argument. But now, of course, they have become important persons, while I am nothing but a retired inspector. Still I think if I were to call on them they would not despise me."

Kalinovich only half listened to Pyotr Mikhailich but gazed steadily enough at Nastenka, on whose face was an expression of boredom and vexation. Pyotr Mikhailich had held forth thousands of times in her presence about Merzlyakov and his own desire to go to Moscow. In her endeavour to conceal her feelings she looked out of the window, or lowered her black eyes to the pages of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* lying open before her, and it must be admitted that at such moments she looked extremely pretty.

"What are you reading?" Kalinovich asked her.

"Oh, I was just turning over the pages," she replied.

"Are you fond of reading?"

"Very. It is my sole amusement. I don't read quite so much nowadays, but I used to read till my head went round."

"And what do you read? It's rather difficult to find anything in the present state of our literature."

"The periodicals," replied Nastenka.

"For the last few years," put in Pyotr Mikhailich, "we have read nothing but periodicals. They bring them out very interesting, nowadays. All sorts of variety in them, light reading . . . useful information, politics and natural history, criticism . . . very nice."

Kalinovich gave a slight smile.

"You are too indulgent to our periodicals," he said. "I don't think their editors claim for them all those virtues which you have discovered."

"I know nothing about that," replied Pyotr Mikhailich. "I speak as I find them. What I don't like in them is the wrangling, I don't like it a bit. I ask you, now. Instead of reasoning about some question they stick pins into one another, or struggle, like wrestlers, to get one another down."

"In an effective and honest magazine," began Kalinovich, "if such a thing existed, there ought always to be strong and energetic opposition to all the rest of our periodicals, which either have no line of their own, or if they have—a false one."

"Of course, of course," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich, who obviously did not understand what Kalinovich meant. "And altogether," he continued with a knowing look, "I don't know about you, Yakov Vasilich, but according to my views literature is on the decline nowadays."

Kalinovich made no reply, and only looked questioningly at the old man.

"Formerly," continued Pyotr Mikhailich, "lofty subjects were chosen for poetry—Derzhavin, for example, wrote an ode to God, lauded the Empress, heroes, their feats, but nowadays they write about nothing but women's eyes and women's legs. I ask you, now, what have we come to?"

A look of mockery flickered over Kalinovich's face.

"Modern literature has one great merit—formerly they used to lie rhetorically, and now they are gradually beginning to speak the truth," he said, with a rapid glance at Nastenka, who replied to him with an approving smile.

"I simply can't read those odes," she said, "or that Ozerov Papa raves over. Fancy—Xenya, a Russian prin-

cess, always kept locked up, and all of a sudden she goes to Donskoi's camp—d'you call that true to life?"

Kalinovich gave a short laugh. Pyotr Mikhailich began to have his doubts.

"I don't give myself out to be an authority," he said. "I am perfectly aware that nowadays writers keep closer to our own feelings, our own life, they instruct in the form of satirical novels—that's good, in its way, of course."

"Very good, I should say. It's a great deal better to stand up for the weak than to laud the strong," said Kalinovich.

"Exactly," chimed in Nastenka, her eyes shining with pleasure.

"If that's the purpose, why, certainly! Who would deny it?" agreed Pyotr Mikhailich, all his defences finally beaten down.

"There are great modern writers," said Nastenka. "Three: Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol, of whom Belinsky writes so much in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*."

"And do you read criticism, too?" asked Kalinovich.

"Yes," she answered, not without pride.

"That Mr. Critic Belinsky is a passionate, clever fellow," remarked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Do you agree with his views?" asked Nastenka.

"Almost," replied Kalinovich. "But you see," he went on speaking slowly and distinctly, "Pushkin—is—dead, though, judging by his talent and the tendency of his latest works, he should have gone far."

"He should have, indeed, Sir! He was an inspired poet. . . . Derzhavin named him as his successor," interposed Pyotr Mikhailich in solemn accents. "Gogol, now," he began, but suddenly checked himself.

"Well, what about Gogol?" asked his daughter.

"In my opinion Gogol has been greatly overpraised," said the old man firmly. "Of course he's an extremely en-

tertaining writer, nobody will gainsay that. Everything he writes is so lively, you can see it all before you, and it's all killingly funny, and at the same time perfectly probable, but—"

Kalinovich smiled faintly at this naïve description of Gogol.

"Gogol is extraordinarily talented," he said. "But so far, despite his great powers, he remains merely a satirist, and can only display one side of Russian life, but whether he will be able to display it thoroughly, as he promises in *Dead Souls*, and really create the Slav maiden and the valorous youth—is as yet doubtful."

"Don't you even like Lermontov?" asked Nastenka

"Lermontov is dead, too," replied Kalinovich, "and who knows how he would have developed, had he lived. All that his writings show is slavish imitation of Pushkin, he expounded as it were a kind of military Byronism and, finally, borrowed wholesale from Schiller in his animism of nature."

"That's not true. I consider Lermontov almost divine," said Nastenka.

"Yes," said Kalinovich after a pause. "He was a clever man with a genuinely passionate nature, but only on certain lines. What he wrote was very strong, but he could see no further than that."

Nastenka shook her head: she definitely did not agree with this.

"As well as those three writers," she went on after a short silence, "there are others I like very much."

"And who are they, may I ask?" said Kalinovich.

"For instance, Zagoskin, Lazhechnikov—I've read his *House of Ice* five times; Count Sollogub—I adore his *Apothecary's Wife* and *Grand Society*. And then come Kulnik, Weltman, Dal, Osnovyanenko."

During the recitation of this list of names Pyotr Mikhailich's countenance beamed with satisfaction at the fa-

miliarity with literature displayed by his daughter. But Kalinovich's expression showed plainly that the authors named did not arouse much respect in him.

"There are so many—you can't possibly read them all," he said.

"Oh, what a severe and exacting critic you must be!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich.

Kalinovich made no reply, merely looking down at the floor.

"Don't you write yourself?" asked Nastenka abruptly.

"What makes you think I write?" he retorted, apparently somewhat embarrassed by the question.

"Somehow I feel sure you do."

"Perhaps I do," admitted Kalinovich.

Pyotr Mikhailich clapped his hands.

"Aha!" he cried. "Well done, Nastenka! Isn't she the girl? Hit the bull's-eye in one go! All the better! All the better! You're clever, young, well-educated ... why shouldn't you be a writer?"

"What are you writing?" Nastenka asked.

But Kalinovich did not answer her.

"That's the author's secret, Miss," remarked Pyotr Mikhailich, "and we dare not try to find it out till the author himself is willing. We will only hope that the time may come when Yakov Vasilich will offer to read his work to us, himself. Then we shall know all about it, and can discuss it, criticize it. . . . But just now—" here he addressed his brother, unable to suppress a yawn, "what d'you say, Captain—shall we hibernate for a time?"

"No, I shall stay here," replied the Captain.

The Captain failed to return to his feathered realm after dinner not more than four or five times during the year, and then only owing to some extraordinary emergency. Evidently the new visitor had greatly aroused his curiosity. This, by the way, could have been inferred from

the attentive way in which he listened to every word uttered by Kalinovich.

"Very well. But I will ask our esteemed visitor permission to retire for a rest. *Habit!*" said Pyotr Mikhailich, rising.

"Please don't let me interfere with your habits!" said Kalinovich.

"But I'm not going to let you go home—what would you do all alone there? You have two companions here—an old captain and a young lady—have a talk with her. She's very fond of talking about literature," concluded the old man, and he waved his hand, bowing and scraping as he left the room. A few minutes later his snoring could distinctly be heard from the drawing-room. This embarrassed Nastenka.

"Shall we go into the garden?" she suggested, for she had noticed that Kalinovich kept pressing his fingers to his temples.

"I should be glad of a breath of air," he admitted. "Your cordials are inimitable, but they achieve their purpose extremely quickly."

They all three went into the garden.

The Godnev garden, bought together with the house from an ex-marshal of the nobility, a wealthy bachelor and an enthusiastic gardener, was distinguished in its day by extreme whimsicality, but Pelageya Evgrafovna was continually endeavouring to break it up into vegetable beds. "There are plenty of trees, but there's nowhere to sow carrots," she would grumble, knowing perfectly well that there would have been room for carrots if she had not planted two extra beds with cabbage. But Pyotr Mikhailich, partly from personal inclination, partly upon Nastenka's insistence, remained firm, and left the greater part of the garden in its original state, saying to his housekeeper:

"We can't have only what is useful, my dear. We must

think of what is pleasant, too. One must know how to blend *utile cum dulce*."

The drawing-room looked out across a small terrace on a dense avenue of lime-trees, which ended in a broad space with a half-ruined Chinese summer-house in the middle. From this summer-house there radiated in all directions statues of the Olympian gods such as my readers may have seen in the one-time Ostashevsky grounds, which have served as a prototype for so many country-house gardens. Of these Olympians none were left but a Minerva minus her right hand, a Venus with half her head broken off, and the legs of some unknown divinity—of all the rest nothing but the pedestals remained. All these fragments of gods and goddesses were painted in vivid colours. Pyotr Mikhailich called this spot a ruined Olympus.

"I must get my Olympus restored," he was fond of saying, as he strolled past the statues, "but there's no finding skilled craftsmen here."

Beyond the lawn was a fairly steep slope to the river, bearing obvious traces of fountains on it, and having paths running down it in all directions. Giant cedars slanted up the slope, and in their shade could be seen something which was either a shrine or a hut where, according to the oldest residents, some old man had once taken refuge, but which was accounted for more simply by others who declared that the former owner, a great practical joker, had tried to give the hut a wild and savage look, and placed within it a wooden doll dressed as a hermit, which rose and bowed whenever anyone entered the hut, frightening certain ladies into fits and affording the owner boundless enjoyment. The sloping bank on the other side of the river was covered with what looked like low, clipped fir-trees, curving towards the horizon, above which could be seen not a single tree or cloud, nothing but a high belfry towering in the midst

of a distant village. The day, as is often the case in early September, was bright and warm. A thin mist was rising from the mirror-like surface of the river. The rays of the setting sun penetrated the foliage of the avenue here and there, casting pools of light on the path beneath, illumining the Venus with the broken head and the Minerva with only one hand, and giving a fantastic aspect to the whole scene. And all this, together with the diminutive Nastenka with her black frock and flowing tresses, and the Captain with his short pipe in his hand seated on the steps of the summer-house, the sun's rays playing on the polished buttons of his uniform, all this seemed to please Kalinovich who declared:

"How nice it is here! What a lovely place!"

"For visitors," put in Nastenka. "It is, by the way, the only place where I feel at home," she added and asked Kalinovich for a cigarette, which she lit from her uncle's pipe.

The Captain shook his head at her, saying:

"Look out! Papa will see!"

Nastenka was very fond of smoking, but had to indulge in it secretly, for Pyotr Mikhailich, who spoiled his daughter and could refuse her nothing, would become furious when he saw her with a cigarette.

"You're a Hussar, Sir, Nastasia Petrovna, a Hussar!" he would cry. "The next thing will be for ladies to drink vodka!"

But the Captain, who took his niece's side in this respect, sometimes, in the strictest secrecy from Pyotr Mikhailich, rolled her cigarettes from weak Turkish tobacco. In the hope of perfecting himself in this art, he would closely examine the cigarettes smoked by all guests, to see what paper they were made from and what sort of cardboard was used for their mouth-pieces.

"Have you ever seen a portrait of George Sand?" asked Nastenka, strolling down the avenue beside Kalinovich.

"I have," he said.

"Is she good-looking, young?"

"She's not very young, but she's still good-looking."

"And is it true she goes about in men's clothes?"

"I don't think so—in her portrait she wears a riding-habit."

"How I should like to have a portrait of her! I simply adore her books!"

"Which are your favourites?"

"They're all positively divine! I couldn't say how many times I've read *Indiana*!"

"And wept over her fate, of course," said Kalinovich. There was a note of concealed mockery in his voice.

"Why weep over the fate of Indiana?" retorted Nastenka. "I by no means consider her so pitiable as others seem to. At least she lived and loved."

Kalinovich smiled faintly but said nothing.

"Would she really have been happier," continued Nastenka, "if she had suppressed her heart, her tenderness, her warm feelings, her dreams even, and sacrificed her whole life to her husband, a man who never loved her, and neither attempted to understand her, nor was capable of doing so? If she had been a trivial, ordinary woman she might have been able to reconcile herself to her position. There are ladies here who frankly admit that they detest their husbands and only live with them for their money."

"Quite a solid reason," remarked Kalinovich.

"Not for Indiana! With her nature she was bound either to die or break away. She was mistaken in her love, but what of that? After all, she knew moments in which she was loved, when she believed this and was happy."

"She ought to have loved Ralph," objected Kalinovich. "The whole book is written round the theme that women frequently love unworthy persons, and only discover the value of worthy ones when it is almost too late. In the

closing scenes Ralph comes forward as a regular hero.

"Ralph a hero? Never!" exclaimed Nastenka. "I don't believe in his love. As an Englishman, a crank, he took up Indiana for want of something better to do, perhaps to drive away his spleen. The lawyer is much more of a hero! He's a living person. He falls in love, suffers. . . . Indiana was quite right to fall in love with him, he is better than Ralph."

"In what way is he better? He's an egoist."

"No. He's a man, and men are always ambitious. But Ralph—pooh, he's a milksop! Indiana could never have been happy with him. For her it would have been going from bad to worse."

Nastenka held forth with the utmost enthusiasm. Her eyes glowed, her cheeks crimsoned and Kulinovich, glancing at her, could not help saying to himself: "Little spit-fire!" As this conversation was reaching its end the Captain came up to them and began walking beside them.

"My uncle here likes Ralph very much," continued Nastenka, pointing to the Captain, and then addressing him: "You like Ralph, don't you, Uncle? That Englishman, you know . . . we were reading about him the other day."

"Yes, I do."

"And what do you like in him?"

"He's a respectable man," replied the Captain.

While listening to *Indiana* being read aloud he had become greatly interested in the taciturn Englishman, and in the last chapter, when Ralph puts his feelings for Indiana into words, the Captain had involuntarily exclaimed: "Ah . . . ah!"

"Was that a surprise to you, Captain?" Pyotr Mikhailich had asked him.

"It was, it certainly was," the Captain had replied.

The young people strolled about the garden till dusk

turned into darkness. They never stopped talking. Kalinovich, by the way, chiefly confined himself to questions and a silent observation. But Nastenka chattered incessantly. She frankly admitted how astonished she had been to hear that Kalinovich had gone round paying calls, and gave satirical descriptions of the local aristocrats. There was something very winsome in the way she, not sparing herself, described in the most ridiculous light her only appearance at a ball, saying she had been the plainest person there, and had received the attentions of that most despicable of men, senior clerk Mediokritsky. She ended up by imitating the General's widow, the way she sat turning her head with slow dignity, and the difficulty she had in speaking.

Listening to her, the Captain shook his head.

"Spitfire!" Kalinovich said to himself again.

In the meanwhile Pyotr Mikhailich had waked, had a wash and was sitting all prinked up in the drawing-room, sipping cranberry juice, which Pelageya Evgrafovna made for him and always brought him with her own hands. At the present moment he was talking to her in undertones about the young inspector.

"Why, good gracious!" cried Pelageya Evgrafovna. "No better man could be desired for our Nastenka!"

She admired Kalinovich for being so neat, so clean, so delicate and, most of all, for showing due appreciation of the food she had cooked for him.

"We are all in the hands of the Lord!" declared Pyotr Mikhailich.

As soon as the young people returned the housekeeper retired and Nastenka, as usual, poured out tea.

"What shall we do this evening? Do you play cards, Yakov Vasilich? What about taking a turn at preference?"

For some reason this proposal seemed to embarrass Kalinovich.

"If you like," he replied. "But I never play for high stakes."

"Our stakes are enormous—we play for kopek points."

"In that case—certainly."

"Get the table ready, Mr. Captain," said Pyotr Mikhailich to his brother.

The Captain fulfilled this request with evident enjoyment, with his own hands letting down the flap of the table, wiping it, getting out and laying in their places a well-worn pack of cards, and some lumps of chalk, and even placing the chairs. He enjoyed a rubber or two.

Nastenka, who never played, said she would take part in the game, too, and they all four sat round the table. Though the game was the merest pastime, the characters of the players displayed themselves to a certain extent. The Captain played attentively and with the utmost caution, thinking over each card very seriously. Pyotr Mikhailich, on the contrary, was eager, made hasty declarations, lost his temper, scolded Nastenka for her mistakes, while making them constantly himself, and shook his finger at the Captain, saying reproachfully: "That won't do, Your Honour—you're letting me down!" Nastenka was obviously thinking of something quite different—she missed her turn, declared at random, and whenever Kalinovich declared a pass, and stayed out of the game, turned to him with a request to teach her. Kalinovich himself played with extreme attention and calculation, evidently intending not to lose—and not losing. The only one of them to win was the Captain, and that from his brother and niece. Then came supper, and after it, while saying good-bye, Nastenka asked Kalinovich if he liked reading aloud.

"Sometimes," he replied.

"The next time you come to see us we will ask you to read us something."

"If you would like me to," said Kalinovich and took his leave.

"Of course we would—we shall be expecting you," Nastenka called after him again, when he was already in the hall.

"Nice fellow, nice fellow!" said Pyotr Mikhailich when he had gone.

"He's a very clever man," rejoined Nastenka.

"Yes, a good mind," continued the old man. "The teaching is very good at the university nowadays—it gets better every year."

"Will you invite him to dinner tomorrow, Papa?" asked Nastenka.

"I will. What other haven could he find just now?" agreed Pyotr Mikhailich and added after a pause: "What I'm thinking about at the moment is how to find him a place to live."

"There's an apartment to let opposite," remarked Nastenka.

Pyotr Mikhailich winked at his brother.

"Oho!" he exclaimed. "Well done, Nastasia Petrovna—eh, Captain? She wants to have the young inspector installed opposite her window."

"That's so," replied the Captain.

Nastenka flushed.

"We must ask the clerk's widow—her lodgers have left," decided Pelageya Evgrafovna, gathering up the cards and pieces of chalk and putting the card table and chairs back in their places.

"Quite right!" agreed Pyotr Mikhailich. "They're good rooms. Go and see her tomorrow, Commander, and mind you bargain with her."

"I will!" agreed the housekeeper.

"But look here!" continued Pyotr Mikhailich, "if he rents a room we shall have to let him have some furniture, he may not be able to get any here."

"All right. I'll see to it," said Pelageya Evgrafovna not without a certain irritation in her voice, and she went out of the room.

She had thought all this out for herself long ago, and a great deal more clearly than Pyotr Mikhailich had expressed.

After this they all dispersed for the night. Nastenka was the first to rise from her chair, saying that she was very tired, and going up to her father who made the sign of the cross over her as usual and sent her to bed with his blessing. But she did not go to bed, and the candle burned long in her room. She was writing a new poem, which began:

Whoever you may be, oh, proud one! . .

VI

What Pelageya Evgrafovna had proposed came about—Kalinovich rented rooms in the house of the clerk's widow. The landlady selected for him was a plump little woman with a passion for pies, coffee, tea, and, not to mince matters, for vodka too. A widow for an indefinite number of years, she had kept herself by letting rooms in her tiny house. She was a close friend of Pelageya Evgrafovna—that is to say, she ran in two or three times a week to see her and to eat and drink, in return for which she contributed all sorts of town gossip. If there wasn't any she invented it. The far sighted housekeeper had decided to send Kalinovich to her, in the first place so that her friend's room should not stand empty, and in the second place, because she knew the landlady would find out all about the young man and tell her everything to the last detail. And truly the clerk's widow began to track down her lodger as if he were a hunted hare, and was at first enthusiastic about him.

"Mother of God!" she said, flinging out her arms in a wide gesture. "What a man! So clever, so discreet—a perfect treasure!"

Later, when Kalinovich accepted the furniture offered him by Pyotr Mikhailich and set it out in his room, she fell into a veritable ecstasy:

"Good gracious, Pelageya Evgrafovna," she exclaimed, "I don't know my own house, it's not my house, not my rooms! I hardly know where I am! Before him I had that landowner, and he made such a mess, dirt everywhere! But this one, bless him, keeps everything lovely and clean. A perfect treasure!"

This raised the new inspector still higher in Pelageya Evgrafovna's estimation.

After his not exactly successful visits to functionaries, Kalinovich seemed to have come to the conclusion that the best thing he could do was to familiarize himself with the town itself and its environs. For this purpose he roamed the streets, inspected the ancient reliquaries in the church, sometimes walked about the fields and meadows, gazing for hours at the river, or strolled about the market-place on market-days, purposely rubbing shoulders with the country men and women, so as to listen to their dialect and study the facial types they represented. But alas, he soon came to an end of these investigations! One day followed another, like crows flying in a straight line. At six o'clock of a summer morning the sun was already fairly high in the heavens. The townspeople began to wake up in their little houses. Smoke rose from the chimneys, the air was heavy with a penetrating smell of fish and onions, a sign that the housewives had begun cooking. A couple of belated fishermen approached the bank of the river from the neighbouring hamlet, crossed themselves as they passed the church, stepped into their boats and pushed off from the shore. The red-cheeked daughters of the townspeople, with their thick waists and

fat behinds, came out of gateways with yokes on their shoulders, waddling along as they went to get water, while their shrill-voiced mamas exchanged abuse with no less shrill-voiced neighbours. Hungry hens clucked incessantly in almost every yard. The bells rang for morning service. In front of the church stood a dilapidated closed cab with a single horse between the shafts. An elderly spinster who had moved from her estate to the town so as to be nearer the church, bringing with her two clubby-faced maids who very soon became objects of temptation for young bachelor clerks, was there even before the deacon. A young man from the gentry, that dunce of a Kadnikov, who had recently entered the marshal's office in the hope of making a career, was strolling down the dilapidated board pavement. He wore gloves, but no tie, and carried his peaked cap in his hand. His hair was wet. He had only just had a bathe, being passionately addicted to this indulgence; though it was not yet seven he had already managed to bathe three times. . . . Morning service was over in the church. The merchants sat drinking tea and eating rolls in their shops. The broad, somewhat puffy countenances of senior clerks could be seen through the open windows of offices, while every now and then the curled and oiled head of a copying clerk would pop out of a window for a moment. Carriages began drawing up at the entrance—first the treasurer's, then the police superintendent's, the judge's and so on. The doctor started on his morning rounds. This was probably the busiest hour of the day; but by about two o'clock not a single carriage was to be observed in front of the government offices. Curtains were drawn in all the windows, the shopmen, for want of anything better to do, coaxed the pigeons strutting about the square with the traditional "chooky-chooky-chook." The pigeons in their stupidity approached, thinking they would be fed, instead of which some of them would be caught by the

tail; but they fluttered and flew away, pursued by a puppy which appeared from God knows where, to the infinite satisfaction of all observers. Inside the houses the wives of merchants and townspeople, or at least the wealthier among them, having swallowed a good-sized glass of home-brewed cordial and eaten a heavy dinner, slept behind chintz curtains on the high-piled feather beds which had been part of their dowry. Their husbands, when not away from home, slept in outhouses or sheds. The officials, too, dined and lay down for a nap, except when, immediately after dinner, they quarrelled with their wives. There is scarcely a soul to be seen out of doors—unless perhaps it is young Kadnikov going for another bathe....

At half past four the bells ring for evening service. Everything gradually begins to come to life. The townswomen, having had their sleep out, go to the well for a wash. The boys come pouring out of the municipal and church schools, fighting whenever they happen to meet. The footmen of the General's widow, after laying the table with the best silver, and serving the fried liver, gudgeons, the coffee and omelet, still their hunger with watery cabbage soup, seat themselves on the bench at the gate in their liveries, and amuse themselves by setting the poodle at all the dogs which pass, and even at the cows when they are driven home from the fields. Groups of strollers make their appearance on the town ramparts, the bright-coloured dresses and gorgeous hats of the women and girls blazing in the sunshine. Glancing at them one cannot help wondering what prevents them from gathering in that wooden summer-house on the ramparts for a dance. There's a Jew who goes through the streets playing on cymbals, isn't there? And I am quite sure the judge's son, a seventh-form lad, and the fifteen-year-old daughter of the permanent official, who have been madly in love with one another for the last fortnight and can

scarcely find an opportunity to exchange a word or two, would love it. But not a bit of it! The groups, meeting, bow, exchange a few words, and separate. In the meantime, attracting universal attention, the youthful son of the magistrate, a passionate lover of horseflesh, and, it is said, a grief to his father, owing to his fondness for dissipation in the company of young springs of the nobility, sweeps past in a light racing sulky drawn by a sable race horse. The sun begins to set. The air grows chill. The strollers disperse for their homes; lights twinkle in windows. Over there, by the light of a single candle, bare-legged Olga is laying the table at the mayor's, and the mayor himself is sitting down to supper with his numerous family. Next door the police superintendent's wife is walking up and down the ball-room with a young officer, evidently flirting with him. And in that little house over there the ambitious magistrate's clerk, a graduate of the divinity school, is covering the seventh page that evening with his fine handwriting, as if he did not know the meaning of weariness, all to curry favour next day with the secretary; but he stops for a moment, draws a single whiff from the pipe lying by him ready, filled with Nezhin tobacco, spits on his finger-tips, waves his hand up and down to stop the rush of blood to it, and resumes his writing. In the house of the first guild merchant his old mother fusses about in a corner room, trimming the lamp hanging before the richly gilded icons and glancing angrily at the couch on which her young daughter-in-law, only just arrived from Moscow, lies asleep. In the inn the landlord, the fleshy nape of his neck showing above a red shirt, sits at his table settling accounts with a driver, slowly propelling the beads on his abacus with his fat, puffy fingers. The driver stands before him in a tattered jacket, his melancholy countenance seeming to say: "What a skinflint!"

Such was the aspect of almost all the life to be seen

from the streets of the little town in which my hero found himself. As for the kindness, good nature and friendliness referred to by Pyotr Mikhailich, perhaps all this may have existed in the old days, but nowadays I think everyone knows that the district supervisor informs on the superintendent of police yearly for his predatory inroads upon crown estates, and that the solicitor, still almost a youth, sets traps for the district judge every time the minutes of any affair offering the slightest profit or advantage are drawn up. Even the aged mayor, for all his good nature, is at loggerheads with the doctor regarding the disposal of hospital subsidies. The two brothers Maslyanikov, wealthy merchants, only a day or two ago, while dividing their father's legacy, fought in the square, in front of everyone, dragging each other by the hair, and all because of their father's worn racoon overcoat. Where's the kindness here? It was something more like hatred, rancour and envy which prevailed, something deathlike, an all-pervading tedium, so that even the officials, the veriest old-timers, inured to boredom, felt it. Nowadays the perquisites to be snatched in the services have grown smaller and more insignificant, so that anything in the way of serious card-playing had quite ceased and the only amusement left was for a member of the district police court to visit his great friend the permanent official, and chat with him for a time till they both fell a-yawning.

"Well, Semyon Grigorich, hasn't anything new happened?" one of them would ask.

"I haven't heard of anything," the other would reply, and again they would both yawn.

"Did you come on foot or in your carriage?" asks the first.

"Why do you ask?" asks the other.

"Oh, nothing! Shall we go to Semyonov's? I must have a look at some dry wine."

"All right, Let's."

They go to Semyonov's, and while they are about it they uncork a couple of bottles of Madeira, and return home a great deal more cheerful, zealously concealing from their wives where they have been and what they have been doing. But their wives always guess from their eyes, and utter severe reprimands, sometimes accompanied by tears. To dry these tears their husbands vow they will never again go to Semyonov's. But they are never believed, and not without reason, for these vows are broken in a week's time.

My hero was too young and too well-bred to fall at once into the way of this sort of entertainment. Indeed, he did not seem to have the slightest inclination for it. Getting tired of his studies of the town, he dined almost every day at the Godnevs', usually staying there late into the night, for it was the only place where he was sure of a cordial reception and where, after all, he could find people who were at least human beings. And perhaps another and more important element was beginning to draw him there. However this may be, while spending the evenings in this way, the young man did not neglect his work. He spent every morning at the school where, as the mathematics teacher Lebedev put it, he had already begun to show his claws. His first official act had been to discharge Grater, and put a swaggering corporal in his place. On Thursdays, which were market-days, many of the pupils, tradesmen's sons, played truant from school, so as to attend the market, some standing behind the counter in their fathers' shops, some just hanging about aimlessly. Learning of this, Kalinovich summoned the parents and told them that if they kept their sons from school on market-days, he would expel them. These worthies supposed the new inspector wanted a present, and pooled their resources to buy two sugar-loaves, and a pound or two of tea, which they brought to him with

their gratitude, but were of course driven away in the most humiliating manner. And when certain boys were absent from school the next Thursday, Kalinovich expelled them all the day after, and neither the entreaties nor the obeisances of their parents could prevail upon him to go back on his decision. During lessons he was present at one class after another, with the obvious intention of investigating the abilities of the teachers. Lebedev, while explaining the extraction of square roots, though he did not actually make a mistake, betrayed a slight uncertainty, and was summoned to the inspector's room immediately after the lesson and informed with cold civility that a teacher should be perfectly acquainted with his subject, and that if his knowledge was insufficient, he would do better to take up some other occupation. Lebedev did not go hunting for a whole month, and was heard continually muttering, and shaking his powerful, unbrushed head:

"There you are! The old stuff again! I'd like to get hold of you, you milksop, and send some shot into you from a good gun, then you'd stop putting on airs!"

Rumyantsev curried favour with the new chief to an inordinate extent. He went every Sunday to pay his compliments, always bowed low before him when he entered the class-room, and, some of the boys declared, actually took off his hat when passing the inspector's house. But none of these efforts produced the desired effect—Kalinovich remained cold and unfriendly to him.

But it was Ekzarkhatov over whom the thunder broke with the greatest violence. After holding out valiantly for almost four months, on receiving his salary for January, he could bear it no longer, and had a drinking bout. He went home, however, quiet and subdued. But his wife started scolding him as usual, threatening to go and complain to the new inspector. "Ho, Yasha Kalinovich!" he exclaimed, shaking his clenched fist like a trag-

ic actor. "As if I'm afraid of a Yasha Kalinovich! The liar! Pretending not to know me! He was ashamed to greet Ekzarkhatov! Know then that I despise him still more, the scoundrel! I'm ready to bow to the very ground before Pyotr Mikhailich, but I wouldn't bend my head half an inch for him. Pretended not to know his old comrade, the mean fellow! Go to him, you viper, crawl to your Kalinovich, hide under his wing!" he continued, approaching his wife. But the latter was already in a pose of defence, and arming herself with the poker, shouted back, "Only touch me! Only touch me! I'll gouge out both your eyes." The two younger girls, afraid for their mother, began to howl. Their cries brought in the landlord, who began to reproach Ekzarkhatov. The latter, assuming a threatening air, shouted at him:

"Avaunt, plebeian!"

But as the plebeian did not go, Ekzarkhatov seized him by the scruff of the neck and lifted him off his feet. His wife caught hold of his tie. The girls bawled still louder ... in a word, there was a rather distinctly unpleasant family scene, after which Madame Ekzarkhatova, taking the landlord with her, went to complain to the inspector, told him all about the delinquent, and to prove what a violent fellow he was, did not even conceal from the inspector the words he had used about his chief. All this was corroborated by the landlord. Kalinovich heard them out with calm attention.

"Good, I will take measures," he said, telling them to go home, after which he immediately wrote out an application to the mayor demanding an official investigation of the violent and improper conduct of the teacher Ekzarkhatov, at the same time dispatching a complaint to the educational authorities of the gubernia by the next post. When this became known, and the foolish wife was made to see the consequences for her husband, she once

more went to the inspector, bowing low before him and imploring him for mercy.

"Oh, Sir," she entreated, "do not send us out to beg in the streets. You know what married life is—husbands and wives don't always get on. He and I have often come to blows before—but it always passed.... Have mercy on us, oh, my father!"

The landlord came with the same request.

"I won't sue him, Sir. I swear to you before the Mother of God, I won't sue."

To all these entreaties Kalinovich replied: "There is nothing more that I can do," and refused to listen.

After this Ekzarkhatov's wife flew to Pyotr Mikhailich and told him all about it.

"You're a fool, Madam, even if you are a lady! All you know how to do is to raise Cain," he replied.

"Oh, Sir, oh, Pyotr Mikhailich—if I had known how it would be! If he had shown any anger when I went to ask him—he just listened to me quietly and civilly, and now he wants blood—the viper!"

"That's what you say now, but you told me I was too indulgent before," said Pyotr Mikhailich and went off to see Kalinovich.

"Yakov Vasilich, father and commander!" he said on entering. "What have you done to Ekzarkhatov? Take no notice, give it up. He'll never do it again, I assure you. It only happens to him about once in ten years," lied the old man in conclusion.

"I can do nothing, now," replied Kalinovich, explaining that he had already complained to the director.

"My God, my God!" said Pyotr Mikhailich. "How impulsive you young people are! Without going into the matter, only listening to a woman! Bad . . . bad," he reiterated in vexation and went home where he spent the whole evening composing a letter to the director from

whom, as from his former chief, he begged for mercy for Ekzarkhatov, declaring that the latter would never again be guilty of such conduct.

His intervention was as successful as could be expected—Ekzarkhatov received a severe reprimand and was transferred to another town. When he came to take leave the old man apparently had been ready to deliver him a stern admonition, but when he saw the mournful figure of his favourite, instead of scolding him he asked him if he had money for the journey. Ekzarkhatov blushed and said nothing. Pyotr Mikhailich thrust a ten-ruble piece furtively and hurriedly into his hand. Unable to speak, Ekzarkhatov tried to catch his hand and kiss it, but Pyotr Mikhailich prevented him. From the first town at which he stopped the poor fellow sent a letter on paper pitted all over with the marks of tears. Reading it Pyotr Mikhailich himself was touched and melted into tears. When Nastenka asked him what was the matter, he replied:

"I shall take this letter to the grave with me. The King of Heaven will forgive me at least one of my sins for its sake."

Kalinovich arrived soon after and, noticing that Pyotr Mikhailich was upset, asked what had happened.

Nastenka told him.

"I shall take this letter with me to my grave, Sir," repeated Pyotr Mikhailich.

For all reply Kalinovich exchanged a glance with Nastenka and they both smiled.

Arguments were always springing up between the old man and the young people with regard to all sorts of everyday occurrences. If some petty official was dismissed, Pyotr Mikhailich would exclaim: "I'm sorry for him, I am really," while Kalinovich, on the contrary, would actually derive a certain satisfaction from the incident.

"He got off lightly," he would remark.

"Oh, Yakov Vasilich," said Pyotr Mikhailich, "he's a married man, Sir! How is he going to feed his family now?"

"He has injured thousands of people, and he and his family may well be sacrificed for the common good," replied Kalinovich.

"I know, I know," exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich, "still they might have given him a good fright first. Who knows, he might have improved."

If a wedding were celebrated in the town, or someone gave a name-day party, Pyotr Mikhailich loved to talk about it, finishing up with the remark: "I like people to get married and enjoy themselves," whereas Kalinovich and Nastenka would usually start by making fun of it all and pointing out how vulgar and silly that sort of thing was, till the old man, losing his temper at last, would shout at them, especially at his daughter, who, in her turn, openly and almost rudely attacked all his gentle, sober convictions, while listening to Kalinovich as if he were an oracle and agreeing with everything he said.

When Pyotr Mikhailich criticized, in the bosom of his family, the harsh measures taken in the school by the young inspector, Nastenka would defend him hotly.

"A man who thinks on noble lines cannot calmly endure this sort of thing," she said.

It was a phrase she had adopted wholesale from Kalinovich.

"There is evil in everybody," protested Pyotr Mikhailich earnestly. "But we see the mote in the eyes of others and do not notice the beam in our own."

"Why, Father, surely Kalinovich is no worse than all those gentlemen?" Nastenka would ask mockingly.

"I don't say that," replied the old man evasively. "He's a clever, educated, well-bred man. I'm very fond of him. What I say is, he's young yet, he's arrogant."

And despite all these arguments, Pyotr Mikhailich really was fond of Kalinovich, invited him to dinner every day, and if he did not turn up sent for him, or went himself to find out if the young man was quite well.

As to Pelageya Evgrafovna's hopes for the future, the old man had nothing against them, and noticing that Nastenka liked Kalinovich, was fond of teasing her about it.

"Whom do you expect, whom are you pining for?" he would ask in humorous tones, when he found her seated at the window gazing fixedly in the direction from which the young inspector always came. This annoyed Nastenka intensely. One day, after she and the Captain had seen Kalinovich home, Pyotr Mikhailich opened the door to her when she came back, singing:

*How far I walked with my beloved,
Yesterday!*

Nastenka flushed.

"Why d'you make fun of me? I don't like it," she said, and went to her room.

Half an hour later the Captain came to her.

"My brother is very grieved that you are angry with him. Go and make it up and ask his pardon," he said.

But Nastenka would not do so, and told the Captain to leave her alone. He looked at her with a mournful smile and went away.

Altogether the Captain had of late been behaving very strangely. He never let his niece out of his sight when Kalinovich was there. If Nastenka sat with him in the drawing-room—there was the Captain. If the young people went into the ball-room, the Captain, uttering not a word, and only lighting his pipe, followed them; but he gave no expression to his feelings, and said not a word.

The frequent visits of the young inspector to the God-nevs were, of course, remarked in the town and, as a matter of course, discussed everywhere. The ball was set rolling by Kalinovich's landlady, who had quite changed her attitude to her lodger, because, though she made daily visits to his room in the hope of being treated to something nice, the young man, to her astonishment, not only offered her nothing, but did not even ask her to sit down, merely saying, very coldly: "What can I do for you?"

"Truly, sisters, you never know anyone till you've eaten a peck of salt with him!" she said. "Look what a fancy I took to my lodger at first—and what a skinflint he's turned out to be! Never has a bite at home, sisters, never buys white bread for tea! Just swills weak tea, and when he does stay at home, goes to bed hungry, like a dog, without supper. He only eats when he goes to the God-nevs—and we know what they are feeding him up for. They say that girl would do anything to get him, and God grant she may, of course! All women are the same, aren't they?"

These rumours were a bitter pill to the still enamoured Mediokritsky. The young senior clerk drowned his grief in drink for three whole days at the tavern with his bosom friend, treasury clerk Zvezdkin, who was initiated into all the secrets of his heart, smoking at his expense, and revelling at the tavern when Mediokritsky was in funds. This time the conversation between the two friends was particularly intimate. Plucking absently at the strings of his guitar, Mediokritsky grew gloomier and gloomier every minute, till, as they say, he was ready to "fade away."

"Sasha, old friend! Play something, calm my soul!" pleaded Zvezdkin, also thoroughly drunk.

In reply Mediokritsky plucked a chord from the strings and sang a song of his own composing:

*Do you know the pretty lass,
Black-eyed, black-browed?
Where is she, where is she?
In Dvoryanskaya Street.**

*What is this dark lass doing?
Where is her love bestowed?
Where is she, where, oh, where?
In Dvoryanskaya Street.*

*And a youth pays court to her —
Not a noble, not a merchant.
Where is she, where, oh, where?
In Dvoryanskaya Street.*

"The rest you must guess and bear in mind," he concluded, ruffling his hair and ordering a couple of mugs of beer for each of them.

"Listen, Sasha! I love you and I know all, understand all!" declared Zvezdkin.

"Wait," began Mediokritsky, smiting his chest. "In that case I will tell the truth—she has trifled with me...."

"I know," said Zvezdkin.

"Wait!" interrupted Mediokritsky, raising one of his hands. "I am a desperate man, I know a thing or two! Wait! I will put her to shame. I will shame her before the whole town." And he whispered something in his friend's ear.

"Splendid, Sasha!" replied Zvezdkin. "Listen to me! You know me—go to it, chum! If I say so—it's enough."

"Enough it is!" replied Mediokritsky, in a voice which had become almost inaudible.

* Street inhabited by gentry.—*Tr.*

VII

Not long after the scenes already described had taken place, Kalinovich was told there was a registered letter and parcel lying at the post-office for him. He who was usually so calm and equable in his behaviour, was thrown into excessive agitation and hastened with rapid steps to the post-office, where he rang the bell violently. The postmaster opened the door himself, as usual. But seeing the young inspector he asked him very coldly in his sombre voice:

"What can I do for you?"

Kalinovich asked him for the letter.

"I cannot do that, Sir. It's not a mail day," retorted the postmaster calmly, turning back into the house, followed by Kalinovich, who had almost forced himself in. "I cannot do that, Sir, I cannot do that," repeated the postmaster. "You wouldn't give me any books on the grounds that you had not yet taken over the library, and I cannot do it. The law does not compel me to issue mail today."

Kalinovich apologized, declaring that he would go to the school that very moment and send him any books he liked.

"Charity is dear in the moment of need, Sir," replied the postmaster. "You would not afford me, a sick man, in a moment of spiritual and physical distress, my only consolation."

Kalinovich went on apologizing and imploring in tones so unusually abject that the old man fixed a penetrating gaze on him, as if trying to see right through him.

"Why are you so anxious for this letter?" he asked. "It will be in your hands tomorrow. What's all the fuss about?"

"This letter," replied Kalinovich, "is from my mother. She is ill and perhaps is telling me that her last moment

has come. You are a father yourself and can judge how hard it is to have to die when your only son is not there to close your eyelids. I shall probably have to leave immediately."

The last words softened the postmaster.

"In that case of course ... in our times when son rises against father, brother against brother, daughter against mother, your display of filial devotion may be called a divine spark. Lord have mercy on us! Lord have mercy on us! Lord have mercy on us! I will not venture to refuse you, Sir. This way, please," he said, leading Kalinovich to the office.

"What good handwriting your mother has!" he said, scrutinizing the envelope and parcel closely.

"A relation addressed it for her," replied Kalinovich, hastily seizing both letter and parcel and bowing.

"Don't forget to send me some books in return for my service," the postmaster called after him.

Kalinovich muttered something in reply and rushed violently downstairs, reading the letter on the way, but without finishing the first page he crumpled it up viciously and thrust it into his pocket.

Arrived at home he went straight to his study and flung himself down utterly exhausted. He was a pitiful sight at that moment. His usually composed and somewhat cold countenance was distorted by an expression of utter despair, the veins stood out on his temples, as if the blood had all rushed to his head: My hero had evidently received one of those blows which instantly destroy the dearest hopes of the young, depriving them of their will-power, their energy, and their self-confidence, and turning them into *weak-willed beings, ne'er-do-wells*, who see before them nothing but the necessity of keeping alive, though why they know not. Kalinovich did not go near the Godnevs all day, although their coachman came to call him to tea. For the greater part of the day

and the whole evening he paced up and down his room, continually drinking water, and the next morning gave the hall porter such a look as he entered the school that the poor man's knees shook and he pressed his hands to his trouser seams.

As luck would have it there was great disorder that day in Rumyantsev's class. Our friend Kalashnikov, who had spent three years in the third form, suddenly took it into his head to call the teacher of literature a red-eyed hare, and urged the whole class to hunt him. "And if anyone doesn't agree," he said, "let him say so, and I'll smash his ribs in for him." Naturally everyone agreed. Rumyantsev arrived as usual, his hair slicked down with pomatum, and took his place at his desk with his perpetual simper, when suddenly Kalashnikov, lowering his head beneath the desk, bellowed out:

"Tally-ho!"

Rumyantsev glanced in his direction.

"Tally-ho! After him!" came in piping voices from the back of the class.

The teacher jumped up.

"What's the meaning of this, gentlemen?" he cried.

"After him! After him!" the whole first row and then the whole class replied.

Rumyantsev ran out of the room to complain to the inspector. Kalinovich went into the class-room and thrashed the whole class, dealing Kalashnikov two hundred strokes so painful that, despite his sturdy build, he begged several times during the process for a drink of cold water, and afterwards went straight from the school to some place outside the town, without going home. Nor did the teacher escape punishment. Kalinovich summoned him to the inspector's room and scolded him for a whole hour, pointing out in the most thorough manner that if the pupils as a whole misbehaved themselves, it meant the teacher was stupid and weak-willed. The timid teacher of literature,

on arriving home, wept all night in company with his mother, wondering anxiously what would become of him.

All this time the Godnevs were impatiently and even anxiously awaiting Kalinovich. The Captain appeared at his appointed time and, greeting his brother, sat down in his usual place and lit his pipe.

"Nastya, I say, Nastya!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich.

"What is it, Papa?"

"Come here, my dear."

Nastenka came into the room in a new dress with her hair curled. She had begun to be very particular about her clothes.

"I wonder if Kalinovich means to come today. I wonder if he's all right! Shouldn't we send to him?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I did send to him, Papa. I think he'll come," replied Nastenka, sitting down at the window, from which she could see the school.

For the last few days, whenever Pyotr Mikhailich thought of sending to Kalinovich, it appeared that Nastenka had already done so.

At about two o'clock the young inspector, looking very gloomy, at last put in an appearance. He nodded brusquely to the Captain, bowed to Pyotr Mikhailich and shook Nastenka's hand warmly.

"What's the matter with you today?" she asked when Kalinovich sat down beside her, deep in thought.

"The boys have annoyed him, I suppose," surmised Pyotr Mikhailich. "I often lost patience with them myself. They can be more upsetting than grown-ups. Have some vodka, Yakov Vasilich. It'll calm you down. Eh, Pelageya Evgrafovna, let's have a drop of spirits!"

The vodka was brought in, but Kalinovich would not have any.

"Why don't you tell us what's the matter? It's very strange of you," said Nastenka.

"What makes you think it strange? The most ordinary thing," he said half-reluctantly. "Just another failure."

"What is it?" asked Nastenka anxiously, but Kalinovich only sighed and fell silent again for some time.

"If only fate would be kind just for once in a lifetime," he said at last. "My very childhood, of which everyone else I believe has pleasant, radiant memories, has left on me only the most melancholy, unhappy impression."

He had never before said a word about himself, except that he had lost his father and mother in childhood.

"As far back as I can remember," he continued, chiefly addressing Nastenka, "I have had to live on the bread of strangers, in the house of a *benefactor*" (he emphasized this last word), "*a benefactor*," he repeated, with a wry grimace, "who ruined my father, and, when my father died of grief, this benefactor, in his generosity, took me in, the orphan, and made me, in reality, a kind of tutor for his two sons, dunces such as are seldom met with."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich.

"And I," continued Kalinovich, still chiefly addressing Nastenka, "lived amidst luxury, in company with these little dunces, who were surrounded by love, for whom nothing was too good . . . for whom a hundred rubles at a time was spent on toys, and I had to look on while they played with these toys, on which I did not dare to lay so much as a finger. They treated me like a slave, harnessing me to a cart and making me draw them, and when my strength was exhausted, they pinched me. And if I could not bear it and ventured to cry, I was sent into a dark room to teach me not to be naughty. The very footmen found a special pleasure in passing me over at table, and in not cleaning my boots or brushing my clothes."

"But that's terrible!" murmured Nastenka.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich.

"And the best of it is," continued Kalinovich after a

pause, "when we grew up and began to be taught, those stupid urchins did nothing and understood nothing. I used to do their translations and their sums, and yet, when there were guests, and their parents boasted of their prowess, it was usually said of me that I was doing fairly well too, but mastered everything chiefly by my diligence . . . in a word, incessant moral humiliation!"

Pyotr Mikhailich could only sling out his arms. Nastenka seemed to be meditating. The Captain did not look so gloomily at Kalinovich as usual. He had aroused a lively sympathy by his narrative.

"I for one rejoice, Yakov Vasilich," remarked Pyotr Mikhailich, "that by the mercy of God you were able to graduate from the university."

Kalinovich smiled bitterly.

"Graduate!" he said. "Why don't you ask me at what cost I graduated? Everything seemed to go against me. That benefactor of mine, who was as strong as an ox, died all of a sudden; while he was alive, his conscience forced him, however stingily, to pay for my board and lodging, and now I did not even have that. I had to run from one end of Moscow to the other, giving lessons for a pittance, and be thankful when I could find them. But there were months on end when I went without dinner and lived in an unheated room, copying documents for ten kopeks a sheet, so as to be able to buy two or three rolls of bread a day."

"Terrible!" repeated Nastenka.

"Terrible indeed!" echoed Pyotr Mikhailich.

Kalinovich sighed and went on:

"Somehow or other I got through four years. Now, I thought, I'll get my degree and all roads will be open to me . . . but . . . in order to succeed in life, apparently, it is not a degree that is required, but the ability to ingratiate oneself, to make up to people, and that, unfortunately, I do not possess. Fellow-students of mine, al-

most imbeciles, were sent abroad and got all sorts of good jobs, simply because they haunted the back doors of professors' houses, and kissed the hands of their wives—German cooks. And all I got was this inspectorship, in which I shall do nothing but sully myself and wear myself out."

"It's no place for you," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich, "so far as I can judge, it doesn't suit your nature, and it's not nearly good enough for a man of your ability."

"It's so wretched, so nauseating," said Kalinovich, almost shrieking, and smiting his chest. "It makes me furious, when I look back on my past. If only a single one of my dreams had come true! Unremunerative toil and perpetual deprivation—that is all life has given me. Say what you will, even if one were born with the humility of a sheep, one couldn't help becoming embittered, and you, Pyotr Mikhailich, are often reproaching me with heartlessness. But oh, God, how am I to feel pity for people when most of them suffer either on account of their own immorality, or because of their own folly, or, finally, their laziness or lack of self-respect? I am guilty of none of these things, and yet I suffer. . . . I intend to revenge myself on the vicious for what I myself endure blamelessly, and nothing shall stop me."

At the last words an expression of something like frenzy came over the young man's face.

"You are perfectly right to feel as you do," said Nastenka.

"I will not venture to judge you, Sir, I will only hope that the Lord will soften your heart—that's all," said Pyotr Mikhailich.

Kalinovich rose and began walking up and down the room, without a word. His hosts said nothing, too, as if fearing to interrupt his meditations.

"What has upset you so particularly today?" asked Nastenka, in a voice filled with sympathy.

"I have never told you, but, hoping to make my way somehow or other, I wrote a novel which I sent to a Petersburg editor, who let it lie about in his office for nearly a year, and I have just got it back with this letter. Would you care to see it?" said Kalinovich, taking from his pocket and flinging down on the table a letter which Pyotr Mikhailich picked up and began reading to himself.

"Read it aloud, Papa," said Nastenka irritably.

Pyotr Mikhailich began reading:

"Dear Friend,

I'm afraid you must be cursing me for my silence, though it is not my fault. I took your novel at once to the right place, but only received an answer a day or two ago. It was returned to me with the statement that the editors were supplied with material for a whole year. Do not be grieved at this failure. Your novel is very good in my opinion, but you see editorial offices here are shrines into which ordinary mortals cannot possibly penetrate, or, to put it more simply—the editor has his own circle of acquaintances, with whom, of course, he has extremely profitable financial relations. They fill up all the columns of his magazine, elevating each other to the rank of genius by means of mutual paeans of praise. From this you will easily understand that they have no reason to admit new writers to their circle. Whoever sends in an article may be perfectly sure that it will not be read, but will lie amidst a lot of old rubbish, as your novel has."

The old man, unable to go on reading threw down the letter.

"How dare the editor not read it?" he exclaimed hotly. "That's what he's there for—it's his duty!"

"He's there to fill his own pockets—that is his duty," said Kalinovich.

"Exactly," said Pyotr Mikhailich, "and this makes him

not the exponent of education, but a mere skinflint. He ought to sit behind the counter in a shop, and not occupy himself with literature. To place obstacles in the way of fresh talent—ugh!”

Kalinovich went on pacing backwards and forwards. “Listen—why not read your novel to us?” proposed Nastenka.

“I will one of these days,” replied Kalinovich.

“Why one of these days? Why should you postpone it? Read it to us today. I’ll just take a nap, and in the meantime you can get your notebook,” put in Pyotr Mikhailich.

“I’ll send Katya for it, Papa,” said Nastenka. “You mustn’t go yourself, they’ll find it without you,” she added, turning to Kalinovich.

“Very well,” he replied.

After dinner Pyotr Mikhailich went straight to his study and Nastenka sat down as close as possible to Kalinovich.

“Did you finish your novel a long time ago?” she asked.

“A year and a half ago,” he answered.

“And are you writing anything at present?”

“I am writing something at present,” said Kalinovich slowly and distinctly.

“What are you now writing about?”

“Something you know very well.”

“Something I know very well,” repeated Nastenka, looking down. “You must read that to us too. It will be still more interesting to me,” she added.

“It isn’t ready yet.”

“Why not?”

“Because it does not depend on me. I don’t yet know how it will end.”

“I think you ought to know.”

“But I don’t,” said Kalinovich.

The young people spoke thus obscurely on account of

the presence of the Captain, who had not the slightest intention of going back to his birds, but sat on in the drawing-room calmly pretending to read, and smoking one pipe after another. Nastenka brushed away the smoke with a gesture of annoyance.

"Your guard sticks to you," said Kalinovich in French.

"It's intolerable," she said quickly, making a face, and then, turning to her uncle, she said:

"Why don't you go hunting, Uncle? I should love to have some game. You might go and shoot something."

"I've given my gun to be repaired . . . it's broken. . ." replied the Captain.

"You could take Lebedev's."

"There isn't anyone at home there. He has gone shooting thirty miles away."

"He's at home. I saw him in the school today," interjected Kalinovich.

The Captain reddened.

"I'm not used to his gun, I wouldn't be able to shoot anything with it," he stammered out.

It was obvious that the Captain was lying shamelessly. Nastenka made an impatient movement, and when Dianka came and laid her muzzle affectionately on her knees, and would have put her paw there, too she hit her quite hard on the head, a thing she had never done before, saying:

"Your dog is always messing up my dress, Uncle."

"*Venez ici!*" said the Captain.

Dianka, gazing at Nastenka in astonishment, as if not understanding why she had been struck, went to her master.

"*Ici, couchel!*" said the Captain.

The young people maintained a silence of half an hour in vain, in vain began talking about things the Captain knew nothing of—he did not budge, but kept his eyes fixed obstinately on the pages of his book.

"Have you got a cigarette?" Nastenka asked Kalinovich at last.

"I have," he replied.

"Give me one."

Kalinovich obeyed.

"Don't you want to smoke yourself?"

"I wouldn't mind."

"Come on then, I'll give you a light in my room," she said, going out of the room.

Kalinovich followed her.

Once in her room Nastenka locked the door in the most casual manner.

Left to himself, the Captain stayed where he was for a short time, and then suddenly got up and tiptoed, as if creeping up to some timid bird, to the door of his niece's room, where he applied his eye to the keyhole. He saw Kalinovich seated at a little table, bending his head and smoking. Nastenka sat opposite him looking steadily into his face.

"You ought not to say you have nothing to live for," she said in an undertone.

"Well, what have I?" asked Kalinovich.

"What about love?" asked Nastenka. "You say yourself it is dearer to you than anything in the world. Is it not capable of making you happy in spite of everything—is it not all—enough in itself?"

"My nature and my circumstances require a love that is excessive, reckless," replied Kalinovich, sighing.

Nastenka shook her head.

"And are you loved so little? Aren't you ashamed, Kalinovich, to say that, when there is not a moment in which you are not thought about? All my joys, all my happiness consist in merely seeing you, I should like to be the most beautiful woman in the world, to please you—and you say you are not loved enough. You're an ungrateful man, after that."

The Captain turned as red as a lobster and listened still more intently.

"Love is proved by sacrifices," said Kalinovich, not changing his contemplative pose.

"And is there no one ready to make any sacrifice you can demand?" countered Nastenka. "If my life were necessary for your happiness I would give it at once with joy, and would bless my destiny."

Kalinovich smiled.

"That's what women always say, until it comes to making the first sacrifice," he said.

"Why should they say it if they don't mean it?" asked Nastenka. "What for?"

"From coquetry."

"You mustn't talk about coquetry here, Kalinovich - remember how you were loved, the very day we met! And a week later you knew all about it. Call it madness if you like, but not coquetry!"

Saying this Nastenka turned aside: there were tears in her eyes.

"Let's make it up," said Kalinovich, taking her hand and kissing it. "I may be wrong," he continued, not letting go of her hand, "but do not blame me too much. Love alone is not enough for a man's heart, especially mine, for I am ambitious, terribly ambitious, and I am sure ambition is no irrational feeling in me. I have brains, knowledge, a strength of will such as few possess. If I could only take one forward step I should go far."

"You must and will be a writer," said Nastenka.

"I don't know...hardly! There are lucky and unlucky people. Look around you—one is stupid, mediocre, lazy, and yet luck comes to meet him, while another must fight for every slightest step on the road to success, must gain every crust of bread by incessant toil. And I, apparently, belong to the latter class."

With these words Kalinovich, putting his elbows on the table and supporting his head on his hands, again fell to thinking.

"Listen, Kalinovich, why are you so depressed? It makes me sad," said Nastenka, rising. "Stop brooding, d'you hear? I command you!" she continued, going up to him and putting her hands on his shoulders. "Come now, let me see a cheerful face! Look at me! I want to see your face."

Kalinovich looked at her, and putting his arm gently round her waist, drew her to him and kissed the top of her head.

Great drops of sweat ran down the Captain's face. He moved his hands, and at last his neck grew so stiff that he had to straighten himself for a few moments, and when he next looked through the keyhole Kalinovich still had his arm round Nastenka and was kissing her face and her neck. . . .

"Anastasiel" he whispered passionately, but further, alas, the Captain could not understand what he said—Kalinovich spoke in French.

"No, no!" said Nastenka, hiding her flaming face on his breast.

"But, my dear!" continued Kalinovich and said something in French again.

"Impossible!" replied Nastenka and drew herself up.

"But why?"

"Because it is!" rejoined Nastenka, once more throwing her arms round him and hiding her face against his breast. "I'm afraid of you," she whispered. "You will be my undoing!"

"Angell My precious one!" said Kalinovich, kissing her, and once more he relapsed into French.

Nastenka listened to him attentively.

"No!" she said, and went back to her former place.

The expression of Kalinovich's face changed immedi-

ately to one of extreme severity. Once more he spoke long to her in French.

"No," repeated Nastenka, and went towards the door so suddenly that the Captain hardly had time to leap back and escape to the drawing-room, where Pyotr Mikhailich was waiting. Nastenka followed him into the room with burning cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"And where's our author?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"He'll be here in a minute, I think," replied Nastenka, taking a seat at the window, which she opened.

"Now, now, my dear! What are you doing? It's cold!" said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Never mind, Papa, do let me! I can scarcely breathe!" said Nastenka.

Kalinovich entered the room.

"Come in, come in!" said Pyotr Mikhailich. "They've brought your pouch, here it is! Kindly take a seat and read, and we will listen."

"Forgive me, Pyotr Mikhailich, I can't read today," replied Kalinovich.

"What's the meaning of this? Why not?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich in astonishment.

"I don't feel quite well. Some other time!"

"Nonsense, nonsense! Surely those editors haven't upset you as badly as all that! Never mind what they say—we'll force them to publish your book!" said the old man. "Nastenka," he added, turning to his daughter, "can't you persuade Yakov Vasilich? What's the matter?"

Nastenka only looked at Kalinovich without saying a word.

"I simply cannot read today," said the latter, and gathering up his leather pouch and his hat, bowed to the company and went away.

"Well, well," said Pyotr Mikhailich. "What's the matter with him? Have you any idea why he doesn't want to read to us, Nastenka?"

"He's angry with me, Papa," replied Nastenka. "I told him he would never be a writer."

At these words the Captain cleared his throat significantly.

"What a girl you are! What did you do that for? He's vexed as it is, and you rub in."

"Hoity-toity! Let him be angry! I'm angry with him," said Nastenka, and after pouring out tea for them all she went to her room.

The brothers, left alone, sat in silence for some time. For want of anything better to do Pyotr Mikhailich read the list of arrivals and departures in a back number of a Moscow newspaper.

"Where's Nastenka?" he asked at last.

The Captain rose in silence, went out of the room, and was back instantly.

"She's in her room," he said.

"What's she doing there?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"She's lying face downwards on her bed," replied the Captain.

Pyotr Mikhailich shook his head.

"They must have quarrelled. Oh, youth, youth!" he said.

Throughout the rest of the evening the Captain kept opening his mouth as if about to speak, but seemed to think better of it, and said nothing.

VIII

Two days passed during which Kalinovich did not appear at the Godnevs and Nastenka did nothing but sit in her room and cry. At last Pelageya Evgrafovna drew attention to this.

"What is our young lady crying about all the time?" she said to Pyotr Mikhailich.

"She's quarrelled with that young man, and they're

suffering. He goes about looking like a thundercloud, and she cries."

To this Pelageya Evgrafovna replied with a deep sigh, and the "Eh, ch, eh... hey, hey, hey," which always signified her displeasure.

On the third day Pyotr Mikhailich began to feel sorry for Nastenka.

"Well, my dear," he said, "I'll go and see Kalinovich. It's silly of him to be offended."

"No, Papa, I'd better write to him. I'll write at once, and have it sent," said Nastenka, visibly cheered by her father's suggestion.

"Write, then! It's hard to know what you really want. Your affairs are your own business," said the old man, smiling.

Nastenka went out of the room.

The Captain, who had been a frowning witness of the scene all this time, suddenly ejaculated:

"In my opinion, brother, it's not proper for a girl to correspond with a young man!"

"That's undoubtedly true according to you and me, Flegont Mikhailich. But nowadays, Sir, times are altered, and morals, too."

"I think you should restrain Nastenka from doing this; she would probably obey you."

"Why should I restrain her? If you forbid them, they'll correspond on the sly. And that's still worse. Let them write to each other—I have complete confidence in Nastenka, I've never observed any bad tendencies in her. If she has fallen in love with a young man not for the sake of money, that's not so dreadful. It's just as it should be."

"There will be talk. There are plenty of people to spread empty talk."

"Let them! Empty talk ends in emptiness."

Nastenka came back.

"Flegont Mikhailich considers it improper for you and Kalinovich to correspond, and on the whole I'm of the same opinion," said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"What's improper in it? I'm not writing anything special to him, just inviting him to come and see us. Uncle sees impropriety in everything."

"He sees it because he loves you and wants all your acts to be those of a well-bred young lady," said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"A strange sort of love that sees evil in every trifle!"

"They're trifles according to you, according to the times, my dear, but in the days of our ancestors girls did not so much as show themselves to men with their faces uncovered."

"And what follows from this?" asked Nastenka.

"It follows that this showed modesty, reserve," continued Pyotr Mikhailich in admonitory tones, "qualities which adorn a woman a great deal more than the most brilliant gifts."

Nastenka was about to answer her father back, when Kalinovich himself came into the room.

"Ah, Yakov Vasilich!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich. "Here you are at last! It's all that Nastasia Petrovna and her sharp tongue! Don't you believe her, Sir—you will, you must become a writer!"

Kalinovich obviously did not understand a word of what Pyotr Mikhailich was saying, but tried not to show it. He stretched out his hand to Nastenka as usual; she gave him hers as if reluctantly, her eyes cast down.

"Have you brought your novel with you?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I have," replied Kalinovich, and from his pouch he drew the notebook with which we are already acquainted.

Pyotr Mikhailich insisted that they all sit decorously round the table, telling the Captain to move up his chair

and even compelling Pelageya Evgrafovna to take her place among them.

While the reading was going on he uttered frequent ejaculations: "Good, good! Well-rounded phrases, language, the interest grows..." And when Kalinovich came to a stop, he said, "Wait a minute, Yakov Vasilich, I have the greatest faith in the Captain's instincts! Tell us how you like it, Flegont Mikhailich, is it good?"

"I am no judge," rejoined the Captain.

"Nonsense, Sir! We empower you on behalf of the author to tell us your opinion."

The Captain was deaf to all appeals.

"Obstinate!" declared Pyotr Mikhailich, and turned to his daughter: "Well, what d'you think of it?"

"I think it's quite good," she replied somewhat coldly.

She seemed melancholy. Pyotr Mikhailich shook his finger at her.

Kalinovich resumed his reading and when he stopped the old man waved his hand playfully towards him, repeating over and over again:

"Bene, optime, optime!"

"D'you mean to say Messieurs the editors consider your novel unworthy of publication?" asked Nastenka ironically.

"I have no idea," replied Kalinovich.

Pyotr Mikhailich's expression was getting more and more serious.

"Wait a bit! Hold on!" he said in tones of profound significance. "Yakov Vasilich! What if I send your book to a certain person in Petersburg, one who is now a big-wig, but who used to be my good friend?"

"It would probably be no use," rejoined Kalinovich.

"Yes, it would!" declared Pyotr Mikhailich firmly. "This person is well disposed towards myself and enjoys great authority in the literary world. I am speaking of Fyodor Fyodorich," he added, turning to his daughter.

"He would get it published," confirmed Nastenka.

"Of course he would! He'd make them print it! All those publishers and editors dance to his piping. Well, do you agree?"

"Why not?" replied Kalinovich.

Pyotr Mikhailich was extremely pleased with these words.

"So you agree," he said, picking up a packet of note-paper and selecting the best and cleanest sheet, after which he put on his spectacles and began writing in his old-fashioned, elaborate round hand, stopping every now and then to mop his perspiring brow. The letter, when finished, ran as follows:

"Your Excellency,

"Dear Sir Fyodor Fyodorich,

"Although the current of time has borne far away the happy days of my youth, when I was so fortunate as to be your class-mate, and although fate has crowned your worthy aspirations by placing you at a height of worldly honour far beyond my reach, nevertheless, fully confident of the immutability of your lofty feelings, and aware of your solicitude, testified to by many examples, for the success of Russian literature, I make so bold as to place before your expert judgement a work of fiction by a young man, a graduate of Moscow University, and my successor in the service, who aspires to have a novel brought out in a Petersburg periodical. Although our immortal Karamzin has said that Parnassus is a high mountain and the path to it is not easy, I see no reason why this path should be completely barred to youth. I have heard that magazine editors do not care to bring out the works of beginners, but the kindness of Your Excellency and your opinion of the merits of any work submitted to your approval could eliminate these obstacles, and, knowing

as I do the author, I venture to assert that he is the possessor of a cultured mind and elevated feelings.

"Begging you to accept my assurances of respect and regards,

"I remain, Your Excellency,

"Your humble servant,

"Pyotr Godnev."

Pyotr Mikhailich read the letter aloud, and asked Kalinovich if he was satisfied with the matter and manner of it.

"Perfectly," replied Kalinovich.

The old man smiled complacently and sent Nastenka to his study for a seal and some wax. Nastenka obeyed.

"Why should she trouble? Allow me to go," said Kalinovich, following Nastenka into the study and trying to take her hand. But she turned from him.

"The executioner does not caress the victim," she said, and went back to her father.

Picking up the manuscript Pyotr Mikhailich crossed himself, saying, "Go, my dear, to the banks of the Neva, and may God go with you!" and then set to fastening it up as solicitously as if it were his own work, for which he expected to receive at least a million, or immortality. While Pyotr Mikhailich was engaged in this, the Captain observed that Kalinovich had bent over Nastenka and was saying something in her ear.

"Very well," she replied.

The whole of the rest of the evening the young inspector was in remarkable spirits. Obviously desirous of cheering Nastenka up, he chattered to her continually, and went so far, during supper, as to fall into Pyotr Mikhailich's way of teasing the Captain.

"Somebody told me today, Captain, that you bring down more game with silver bullets than with leaden ones," he said. "Do you really buy them?"

To everyone's surprise the Captain turned pale and his lips quivered.

"I'm a poor man," he said in muffled tones. "I have not got the money for that."

Kalinovich was disconcerted, but forced himself to keep up the jesting tone.

"What if you are poor?" he rejoined. "The hunter always puts glory first, and I only wanted to ask you if it were true."

"Kindly leave me alone! I don't mind brother Pyotr Mikhailich making fun of me, but you're a little too young," snapped the Captain.

"I see you don't understand when people are joking," put in Nastenka.

"Thanks, I understand perfectly," replied the Captain.

"Warrior!" pronounced Pyotr Mikhailich solemnly. "Calm your noble chivalrous spirit and eat."

"I am eating, brother. Excuse me, I only wished to tell him..."

"Oh no, you didn't," cut in Kalinovich, scowling at the Captain. "You replied to my thoughtless joking with a snub. I shall endeavour another time not to expose myself to such unpleasantness."

"That's exactly what I would ask you to do," replied the Captain, and fell to eating, his eyes fixed on his plate.

"Come, come, gentlemen! What's all this bickering? I won't stand it," said Pyotr Mikhailich in tones of finality, and there the conversation ended.

Kalinovich was the first to leave, soon followed by the Captain. While saying good-bye the latter once more apologized to Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Forgive me, brother. I couldn't stand it."

"Never mind! But you must make it up. He's a good fellow, and there's no one like you."

Again the Captain seemed about to say something, and again thought better of it...

Once out in the street Flegont Mikhailich stood still, as if thinking, and then, instead of taking his usual way home, turned in quite another direction. It was a dark autumn night. Gusts of wind sprang up every now and then, spreading a chill around him and howling piercingly in a neighbouring chimney. In the whole town not a single window was lighted up—all were sleeping peacefully, and the only sound was the barking of the dogs from the row of shops.

When he got to the house in which Kalinovich lived, the Captain halted, stood gazing at the window for some time, and returned the way he had come. Back at his brother's house he sat down on the kerb-stone and lit his pipe. At that very moment a shadow flitted out of the backyard of the young inspector's house, descended to the bank of the river, and hid behind the birch logs stacked all along it. When it arrived opposite the Godnevs' garden the shadow disappeared. Just then, to show that he was awake, the watchman tolled two o'clock on the church bell. Alarmed by the sounds, a flock of crows flew off the church roof and soared through the air cawing. And now the Captain observed two shadows, one of which turned into the side-street, while the other approached the gate of Pyotr Mikhailich's house and seemed to be doing something. The Captain was at the gate in a few bounds, and seized the shadow by the scruff of its neck.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" he cried.

Instead of answering, the shadow tried to break away, but in vain. It seemed to be in the grip of iron pincers. After Ivan Pavlov, the butcher, who could lift sacks of flour weighing nearly fifteen poods, and Lebedev, who could lift ten poods, the Captain was the strongest man in the town and could bend a horseshoe in his hand as easily as if it were a roll of white bread.

"Who are you?" he repeated.

The shadow began flourishing a stick, but the Captain tore it easily from its hand. It turned out to be a house painter's brush, dipped in tar. The Captain understood.

"Ah! So that's what you're up to!" he cried, hastily flinging the shadow to the ground. And digging his knee into its chest, he smeared its face with the brush.

"Help!" shouted the shadow.

"Silence!" commanded the Captain, exerting a little pressure with his leg and continuing his occupation.

"Help! Help!" responded the other shadow from the street, but did not come to the rescue.

There was quite a hullabaloo in the street.

"Get up, old man! They're shouting help in the street," cried the good wife, trying to rouse her husband from his heavy slumbers.

The latter opened his eyes for a moment.

"Leave me alone!" he said, swearing, and turned to the wall.

"What a beast! People crying for help! A corpse will be found under the window and you'll be sued in court for it!" went on his wife. She gave her husband a dig in the ribs, and on getting nothing but angry mutterings in reply, exclaimed: "Dear Lord! How terrible! The saints preserve us!" and then, yawning and crossing herself, was soon snoring too.

"Wenches! Wenches! Marfa, Katya!" shrieked the old spinster lady who had come to live in the town so as to be nearer a church; and she sat up in bed looking as gaunt as a figure of death, tufts of grey hair sticking out all round her head. "Come here! Go and see what the noise in the street is, you hussies!"

But nobody answered her.

"My God! My God! What sleepy heads—they hear nothing!" muttered the old lady, and getting out of bed and putting on her felt boots, she lit a candle in front of the icon and went into the next room where her two serv-

ant girls slept. But, alas, their beds were empty and where they were nobody knew, probably somewhere their mistress had strictly forbidden them to go.

"Mother of God! My protectress! Thou art my only hope, I am deserted by all, my kindred, my servants . . . oh, oh! See what their immorality leads to—running about at night . . . smoking pipes, one of them even came back drunk, the hussy! Sodom and Gomorrah! Sodom and Gomorrah!"

Just then one of the girls came running up, red and out of breath.

"Murderess! Where have you been—tell me that!" said her mistress, shaking her fists in the girl's face.

"I ran out into the street, Ma'am—there's such a noise going on there!"

"Little liar! And where's the other miscreant?"

"She was taken bad, Ma'am, she's lying on the stove ledge, we're sorry. . . ."

"Lies, lies! I'll have your plaits cut off tomorrow, both of you, and send you back to the village! I can stand it no longer, I don't know what to do with you!"

"Just as you say, Ma'am. We never contradict you in anything. But now you'd better go back to bed and let me rub the soles of your feet," said the ingenious damsel and, putting her mistress to bed, she rubbed the soles of her feet till the old lady fell asleep, and ran off on her own affairs.

The noise was heard at the Godnevs' too. The first to rush out into the street was the ever-watchful Pelageya Evgrafovna with a lantern in her hands. The light from her lantern fell on the Captain and his opponent, who looked very much like Mediokritsky. When he recognized him the Captain grew still more furious.

"So you're the one who tar people's gates!" he exclaimed, and began wielding the brush savagely over the nose and lips of the young senior clerk.

The rage and exasperation of the Captain were perfectly legitimate—according to provincial morals to tar the gates of houses in which a young married woman or a girl lives is equivalent to public disgrace, and is resorted to by rejected lovers amongst both the common people and the merchantry.

The Captain would probably not soon have released his victim, but at that moment Kalinovich appeared, as if from nowhere. The Captain was so astonished that he dropped the brush and let go of Mediokritsky, who took advantage of this to break free and run away. Kalinovich, too, seemed agitated. Pelageya Evgrafovna, why, she could not have said, began opening the shutters.

"What's the matter?" Kalinovich asked her. "I hadn't yet fallen asleep when I heard a noise, so I dressed hastily and went out to see what was going on."

She opened her arms wide in a gesture of bewilderment.

"I know nothing," she said.

"What were you doing to him, Flegont Mikhailich?" he asked the Captain.

"I will inform my brother," replied the latter and went into the house.

"Allow me to go with you," said Kalinovich, following him.

They found Pyotr Mikhailich in a terrible state. He was standing with his arms extended in front of Nastenka who, still in the dress she had worn in the evening, was lying on the sofa with her eyes shut.

"Come here, gentlemen, for God's sake—look what's happened! Nastya's fainted!" he cried in bewildered tones.

Pelageya Evgrafovna rushed to unfasten Nastenka's dress, and Kalinovich seized a carafe of water from the table and began moistening her temples. Pyotr Mikhailich, trembling violently, kept asking:

"Well? Is she better? Is she better?"

At last Nastenka opened her eyes, but seeing Kalinovich beside her, turned away abruptly and began laughing and crying in turns. Pyotr Mikhailich sank on a chair and seized his head in his hands.

"She has gone out of her mind!" he groaned.

But Nastenka was only in a violent fit of hysterics. Kalinovich stood there, deathly pale, without a word. The Captain looked on, scowling. The only one who retained presence of mind was Pelageya Evgrafovna. She led Nastenka to her bedroom, laid her on her bed, administered Hoffmann drops and went back to console Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Well, and what's the matter with you? Just like a child!" she admonished.

The old man was indeed just like a child.

"I had just begun to doze," he said, "when suddenly I heard: 'Help! Help! They're killing me!' I thought it came from the garden and I lit a candle and came in here. And there was Nastenka just coming in from the balcony. . . . I called out to her . . . and down she falls on the sofa!"

The Captain began telling his brother in broken phrases how he had had a headache, and thought he would take a walk, and so on.

Once more Pyotr Mikhailich flew into a rage.

"The rascal! The scoundrell! He dared to cast a slur on my daughter! I'll go to the mayor this very minute. . . . I'll go to the Governor himself. . . . I'm the most respected man in the whole town . . . to the mayor!" cried the old man, and, despite all persuasions, began hastily dressing.

"I know whose work this is—it's that viper of a—! It was she who taught him. . . . I'll smear her whole house with tar tomorrow. He's her lover! She's a depraved woman and dares to cast disgrace on an honest girl. God

will avenge it!" he concluded, banging the door violently as he went out.

"There he goes! He'll do no good and only work himself up still more! And I shall have to look after him when he's ill!" scolded Pelageya Evgrafovna.

Kalinovich volunteered to accompany Pyotr Mikhailich and only just caught him up in front of the office.

As soon as they got to the police station they sent for the mayor, which veteran servant of the State immediately appeared in uniform, wearing his sword. When sent for by the gentry he invariably turned up in full uniform.

Pyotr Mikhailich was too exhausted and agitated to speak, but Kalinovich related everything on his behalf with the utmost detail and logic. The old mayor also flew into a passion, banging with his stick on the floor and exclaiming:

"Ho, ho, ho! So that's what they're up to! To the cells with him, the rascal!"

He whistled, calling out in a loud voice: "Borzo! Come here!"

In response to this summons the man on duty appeared. He was a waif of the streets, who worked for hire in the police force and had several times offered himself as a substitute for army recruits, but had never been accepted owing to the fact that he had lost every tooth in his upper jaw, in a fall from the roof in childhood. When he appeared before his chief, Borzoi drew himself up.

"Go and find me that ginger-haired Mediokritsky, this minute, if you have to go through fire, water and under the earth—and bring him here, the villain, alive or dead! If not you'll have a taste of this!" said the mayor, raising his stick threateningly.

"Very good, Your Excellency," replied Borzoi, turning on his heel, and rushed out into the street as swiftly as any greyhound.

"I'll send him to the cells, the villain!" said the mayor, pacing up and down the office and tapping with his stick.

"The cells!" repeated Pyotr Mikhailich.

"But for me, Sir," continued the mayor, "those townsmen and ruffians would be up to their tricks every night."

"Precisely, precisely," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich, "I'm not a harsh man and wish nobody any harm, but such people are not to be pitied."

"And I do not pity them, Sir," replied the mayor, looking very fierce. "I have no intention of trifling with them. The governor himself knows the old lame mayor!"

"That's the way, that's the way! I myself when I was inspector was never hard on mere playful tricks. But I had no mercy on bullies or insolent fellows!" boasted Pyotr Mikhailich.

Kalinovich could not help smiling when he heard the old fellows bristling up. As to Pyotr Mikhailich we know how strict he was; all the police measures of the mayor were confined to shouting and wielding his stick, which, however, he did so skilfully that it was feared almost more than himself, as if in it lay all his power.

Mediokritsky was brought in. On his face, which had obviously been energetically scrubbed, the traces of tar could still be seen. The old mayor sat in a threatening pose, the emblem of justice before him on the table.

"Where were you tonight?" he asked.

"At home, Sir! Where else could I be?" replied Mediokritsky insolently enough.

"What? At home were you? You're a liar! What were you doing on Dvoryanskaya Street, at the gate of Mr. Godnev?"

"I wasn't there."

"You weren't! He actually denies it, the rascal! Tell me the truth. I don't like lies, you know," cried the mayor, banging with his stick.

"Don't bang your stick and shout at me—I'm a government official," said Mediokritsky.

Pyotr Mikhailich only shrugged his shoulders, and the mayor threw himself back in his chair.

"Eh!" he exclaimed. "So you criticize our police service! He must be dealt with officially, in the military way," he added, assuming a calmer and more official tone. "Answer my question."

"I shall not answer you, Sir," retorted Mediokritsky, "because I do not know why I have been arrested. I was seized like a thief or a common miscreant. And since I come under the authority of the Zemstvo court, I desire to have a deputy, and shall not answer you. Be so kind as to send for my chief, the superintendent of police."

"Oh, so you don't trust me! Am I to make up to you? To the cells with him—the rascal!" cried the mayor, again falling into a fury.

"I know nothing, and I only demand what is my legal right, and be so kind as not to shout at me!" repeated Mediokritsky as insolently as ever.

The old man got up and began pacing the floor, and if he had been alone with his prisoner the latter would probably not have eluded his stick.

"I believe the superintendent of police may be sent for, if Mr. Mediokritsky insists," interpolated Kalinovich.

"Certainly," replied the mayor and immediately whistled.

Borzoi appeared again.

"Go at once to the house of the superintendent of police and make somebody wake him and ask him to come here. Tell them it's urgent."

Borzoi obeyed.

"I suppose Mr. Mediokritsky may go," suggested Kalinovich.

"He may," replied the mayor. "Go into that room," he

said sternly to Mediokritsky who went out of the room with a scornful smile.

After this, Kalinovich led both the old men to the window and earnestly explained to them that they would scarcely be able to prove anything by an official investigation, and that Pyotr Mikhailich would of course not like his name, still less his daughter's name, to be involved in a lawsuit.

"True, true," agreed the mayor.

"Good heavens! I never had any dealings with the law—what have I come to!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I therefore suggest," continued Kalinovich, "that as soon as the superintendent of police arrives, the mayor and he draw up a detailed account of Mediokritsky's behaviour to the Governor, for it will be much better for him to dispense altogether with a lawsuit."

"You may be right, but I shall keep him locked up," said the mayor.

"Quite right," said Pyotr Mikhailich approvingly. "As God is my judge, I will never forgive him! I will write to the Governor myself. He will understand a father's feelings. If he had injured me, insulted me, I would only laugh—but he has assailed the honour of my daughter! I can never forgive that!" added the old man, smiting his breast.

The superintendent of police arrived with an expression of alarm on his face. We already know something of him, and I will only add that he was the meekest man in the world, an arrant coward as regards the service, and still more afraid of his wife. The matter was explained to him.

"Good gracious!" he said, growing uneasier than ever.

"We'll draw up a report together and send it to the Governor," said the mayor.

"Very well," agreed the superintendent of police. "But I hope it won't cause any unpleasantness."

Kalinovich told him that no possible harm could come of this and that, on the contrary, were they to hush the affair up, they would have to answer for it themselves.

The superintendent of police agreed with this too.

"Of course we should," he said.

"You indubitably would," confirmed Kalinovich and then and there wrote out in his own hand, without a single erasure, a report to the Governor couched in the most uncompromising terms. The mayor and the superintendent of police signed it.

Mediokritsky heard the whole conversation through the chinks of the partition, and seeing that things looked bad for him, rushed up to the superintendent of police as the latter was leaving.

"Nikolai Yegorich, why didn't you stand up for me? I'm sure I have always done my best for you. . . . Since I must suffer anyhow, I am ready to ask their pardon."

The superintendent of police went back. Mediokritsky went after him.

"He wishes to apologize," said the superintendent of police.

"Your Excellency," said Mediokritsky, addressing the mayor first, and beginning to apologize.

"No, no," said the mayor.

"Pyotr Mikhailich"—he turned to Godnev with the same entreaty. "Do not ruin a young man for life! Our Heavenly Father will repay you for your kindness!"

With these words Mediokritsky threw himself on his knees before Pyotr Mikhailich. The old man turned away.

"Your Excellency, show mercy!" implored Mediokritsky, moving over to the mayor on his knees.

The mayor began to tug at his moustache.

"Forgive him, gentlemen!" said the superintendent of police, and no doubt the old fellows would have yielded, if Kalinovich had not intervened.

"I don't think generosity is suitable here, Pyotr Mi-

khailich," he said. "And you," he added, turning to the mayor, "can still less, as the head of the whole town, afford to hush up such behaviour."

"You intended to insult my daughter, Sir—I shall not forgive you that," said Pyotr Mikhailich, and went out of the room.

"And I will not pardon him, either," decided the mayor, hobbling off after Pyotr Mikhailich.

It is unnecessary to describe the cloud of slander which burst over the head of my poor Nastenka after this. The local ladies, many of whom, in the most discreet and private manner in the world, had love-affairs with their footmen, parish clerks and divinity students—these ladies, as if a mortal insult had been dealt them, chattered like so many magpies, and, needless to say, the most conspicuous among them was the police superintendent's wife, who rushed about the town in a sort of frenzy, telling everyone that Mediokritsky had been fully justified in doing what he had, since this Mademoiselle Godneva had singled him out, and vowing that she had seen this immoral chit with her own eyes, sitting at the window with her arms round the young inspector. Kalinovich's landlady also had a tale to unfold. She informed numbers of people in strict confidence that Nastenka used to visit Kalinovich alone and sit beside him on the bed, and there could be little doubt what they did.

"Why, nowadays girls don't know how to behave, for goodness' sake!" she exclaimed. "If they don't fear God they might at least fear public disgrace," and she shrugged her shoulders.

To crown all, Mediokritsky was suddenly expelled from his office by order of the Governor. This made official society rally round him more eagerly than ever, for they felt instinctively that he was one of themselves, flesh of their flesh, and that the Godnevs and the Kalinovich had far outstripped them.

IX

In the meanwhile the season of Lent came round, bringing with it many changes in the life of the Godnevs: on Pardon-Sunday in Shrovetide, everyone in the house went about asking forgiveness of one another. After rising early and going to the bath-house on the first Monday in Lent, Pyotr Mikhailich put on his oldest clothes, and from now on shaved much less frequently than usual, gave up reading novels and magazines, and devoted himself to the perusal of scientific treatises and sermons. During the first week of Lent, according to a long-established tradition, they began to fast, attended as a matter of course all the church services, and abstained from meat. Pyotr Mikhailich even gave up sugar in his tea in favour of honey, and on the Thursday before the evening service, respectably clad in a frock-coat of grey homespun and a shirt with an old-fashioned frilled front, sat in his study waiting for the sound of the church bells. Pelageya Evgrafovna had washed and done her hair, ready for church. Nastenka and Kalinovich were playing *grande-patience* in the drawing-room. Nastenka had refused to fast this Lent. The postman, first seen by Pyotr Mikhailich, entered the yard.

"Who can it be from?" he wondered.

He was handed a thick letter and a parcel both bearing the Petersburg postmark. The old man was quite alarmed.

"Can it be they've refused it again?" he said, and hastily putting on his glasses began reading the letter. His face cleared after the very first lines. When he had finished, he crossed himself and called out:

"Yakov Vasilich! Nastenka! Come here quick—hurrah!"

"We're busy, Papa," Nastenka called back.

"Hurrah! Come here quick, you silly things!" Pyotr Mikhailich went on shouting.

Nastenka and Kalinovich came into the room.

"What are you shouting for, Papa?" she asked.

"Here's why I'm shouting—see this letter, this magazine, and this newspaper! For all this Yakov Vasilich will have to treat us to champagne—that's all I can say!"

"Who's the letter from?" asked Nastenka, trying to pick up the parcel from the table, but Pyotr Mikhailich would not let her.

"Ha-ha! Very inquisitive! If you know too much you'll soon be old!" he said, and stuffing the letter, magazine and newspaper into one of the side-pockets of his jacket he fastened his overcoat securely.

"It must be from Petersburg," said Kalinovich in hesitating tones.

"I won't tell you. Get the champagne ready, and we'll see," replied the old man with comic solemnity.

"What is it, Papa? Tell us at once—don't be such a tease!" said Nastenka.

"I'll buy a dozen bottles, but for God's sake, don't try our patience!" said Kalinovich, who had begun to turn pale.

Pyotr Mikhailich laughed.

"It's worth it, Sir!" he said, and, drawing out of his pocket the letter, written on the most expensive glossy paper, he began reading it aloud, emphasizing every syllable:

"Esteemed Pyotr Mikhailich!

"I hasten to reply to your missive and rejoice that I am able to fulfil the slight favour you ask of me. I hereby append the issue of the magazine in which your protégé's novel is printed, together with an extract from a newspaper which I happened to come across in the English Club, containing a flattering review of his work.

"Hoping that God will preserve you in his mercy, I remain, with cordial wishes,

"So-and-so."

This brief epistle, obviously indited in the most negligent and condescending spirit, seemed to the Godnevs an almost divine message.

"What a letter—and what a man my estimable Fyodor Fyodorich is!" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich, when he had finished reading.

"He must be an awfully nice man!" put in Naslenka.

"Never was a nicer!" declared Pyotr Mikhailich. "A noble heart, an elevated mind—what could be nicer!"

"What do they write in the paper?" asked Kalinovich, clutching at his head as if he heard nothing of what was being said.

"Here it is," replied Pyotr Mikhailich, and unfolding the newspaper cutting, he began reading: "'Literary-news article.' What literary news is there, I wonder! Let's see," he said, and continued:

"'It is long since we have begun our article with such pleasure as in the present instance, and this pleasure, we admit, has been evoked in us not by verses with eccentric rhymes translated from the Hungarian, not by a novel of Madame D., which, though issuing from the facile pen of a lady, nevertheless is written in a style so heavy that we have not been able to find a single person strong enough to read it all through. And, finally, not by the learned effusions of Mr. Sladkopevtsev *On Roman Cohorts* which we leave to adepts to enjoy and appreciate as they deserve. For our part we have been unpleasantly struck by the misprints appearing on every page and entitling us to accuse the author of negligence in the publication of his works (we do not venture to suspect him of ignorance of grammar, though we have a certain right to do so).'"

"What's all this?" said Pyotr Mikhailich, ceasing to read. "So far nothing but abuse.... Oh, these journalists!"

"Go on, Papa! It probably says something further on," interrupted Nastenka impatiently.

Pyotr Mikhailich continued: "What then has evoked our pleasure? the reader may well ask. We reply—this pleasure has come from the reading of a story by Mr. Kalinovich, whose name, as far as we remember, we have never before come across in the pages of the periodical press. This makes it all the more agreeable that we are able to hail in him a wise, cultured and talented writer. For ourselves we fervently trust we shall not be disappointed in the hopes we have placed on Mr. Kalinovich, and for him we wish that he may go on writing and develop to the full those elevated ideas which are so plentifully scattered over the pages of his first, but remarkable, work, with its highly dramatic plot."

During the reading of these last lines Kalinovich's expression changed again and again—it was obvious that the praise gave him extraordinary pleasure, try as he might to conceal it.

"Oh, how glad I am!" said Nastenka, covering her face with her hands.

"Splendid! Splendid!" said Pyotr Mikhailich. "And you complained of your fate, Yakov Vasilich! See how it has smiled on you, by placing you immediately in the ranks of our best writers!"

"Who could have expected it?" said Kalinovich.

"I didn't think it would be like this," admitted Nastenka.

"Ah, but *I* did, *I* expected it," declared Pyotr Mikhailich. "After all, the old literature teacher knows a thing or two! I knew it was good at once."

"I saw it was good, too," said Nastenka, "but that everyone should like it from the very first. . . . I don't suppose a writer ever began with such success before."

"Very few," chimed in Kalinovich, continuing to pace up and down the room and endeavouring to wink back

the tears gathering in his eyes. Pyotr Mikhailich, observing this, glanced at Nastenka, whispering:

"Moved to the depths of his heart, you see!"

"May I see with my own eyes how it looks in print?" asked Kalinovich, and seizing the magazine, he made as if to begin reading, but checked himself. . . . "I can't," he muttered, and again seized his head in his hands. "Oh, what a powerful sensation—to see one's work in print. . . . It's too much for me!"

"Never mind, my boy! Nothing to be ashamed of in that! These are happy tears. Shall I tell you what I'm wondering? Will they pay you, or for the first time let it go at that?"

"They'll pay of course," replied Kalinovich, "they usually pay fifty silver rubles a folio. I know that for certain."

"Fifty!" repeated Pyotr Mikhailich, calculating the number of folios, and addressing his daughter: "Now, Nastenka, how much will nine and a half by fifty be?"

"Four hundred and seventy-five," she replied.

"Not bad! We can afford to drink to the occasion," said Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Oh, I quite forgot!" said Kalinovich. "Whom can we send for champagne?"

"Wait a bit," interrupted Pyotr Mikhailich, "I was only joking, you know. First we'll go to the monastery for the evening service and you, Yakov Vasilich, can offer a prayer of gratitude to the local saint."

"Oh yes, do, Yakov Vasilich!" put in Nastenka. "I have a great belief in our saint!"

"Delighted!" replied Kalinovich.

"Why, of course!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich. "Not a single merchant here goes to the market and back without paying homage to the relics. I don't mind admitting that I vowed to do this when sending your manuscript."

Just then Pelageya Evgrafovna entered, in her seal-

trimmed silk bonnet and woollen pelisse, looking extremely dissatisfied.

"What's this, Pyotr Mikhailich?" she exclaimed. "You said we would all go together, and yet you sit there! The bells have been ringing ever so long."

"I know, I know! Never mind! We're all going to the monastery, you come, too! And you, Nastenka, go and get ready," said the old man, hastily donning his cloak and arming himself with his stick.

"Now it's the monastery—still farther away!" muttered the housekeeper, as she went out of the room. "Isn't it all the same where we pray? We'd be in time for the end of mass."

"Come on, come on!" said Pyotr Mikhailich, following her out of the room, and exclaiming: "Hurry up, Nastasia Petrovna, hurry up! You always keep us waiting!"

At last Nastenka came back and she and Kalinovich caught up her father and the housekeeper half-way to the monastery.

This monastery was very old and not very wealthy. It was entirely surrounded by a high thick stone wall with loop-holes in it and a tower at each corner. The huge iron gates adorned with two cast-iron archangels, were almost always locked, and they entered by a little gate. The two chapels in the middle of the courtyard, one with a belfry, and the other just a shrine, were also of ancient architecture. Against the wall were built the tiny and somewhat dilapidated cells of the monks and lay brothers.

As Pyotr Mikhailich and his family approached the monastery the single cracked bell was ringing for the Lenten service. The presence of the old blind monk seated at the entrance in his round calotte and belted cassock of thin black nankeen, showed that a service was being held in the winter chapel. This old man, blind from birth, had served in the monastery for many years as a kind of

door-keeper. In the frosts of winter or the heat of summer he always wore the same nankeen cassock, with worn boots on his bare feet, and sat at a table bearing a small icon depicting the patron saint, and a tray covered by a cloth embroidered with a cross for the reception of donations to the monastery. As our pilgrims drew near, the blind man, hearing their footsteps, rose to his feet.

"For the patron saint," he said, bowing from the waist.

All said a prayer. Pyotr Mikhailich put a ten-kopek piece on the tray. Kalinovich did the same. The church porch formed a wide corridor, in which the sound of their steps echoed faintly from the high vaulted roof. This corridor, as in many old churches, was almost dark, though its walls were adorned with frescoes illustrating subjects from the old testament. Pyotr Mikhailich wrestled for some time with the solid iron door of the church which at last swung heavily open on its creaking hinges. The church was quite a big one, and in the faint light it appeared enormous. The only light came from the icon lamps and slender wax candles before the icons of the local saints, who seemed to be starting out of their frames as if they really were relics, with an effect that was the more striking since it owed nothing to art.

There were not many worshippers—some old women, two of whom lay prostrate on the ground, a peasant in a full-skirted grey coat, kneeling in front of an icon upon which his eyes were fixed, repeating some prayer, and every now and then moving his shaggy flaxen head from side to side, and a few old monks stood in their usual places beneath a gallery at the back of the church. The service was being conducted by the Father Superior himself, a hoary ancient who must have been at least eighty, but was still vigorous, and had lively, piercing eyes. He was renowned throughout the district as a religious ascetic, with austere ways, and was considered very severe in his treatment of the brethren. In all the other

churches in the town service was long over, but in his church it was only half-way through. His evening prayers lasted four hours. He burst out of the sanctuary, prayed long before the altar gates and only then began to intone the ritual prayer: "Thou, O Lord, art my Sovereign." Bowing thrice, he went on praying for a long time, after which, as if in a kind of ecstasy, he exclaimed in a loud voice: "Thou, O Lord, art my Sovereign!" made yet another profound obeisance and, bowing abruptly to the worshippers, returned to the altar. A youthful lay brother standing in the middle of the church began reading the canon for the day zealously and distinctly. There were five singing monks inside the choir at the right; in their black cowls and wide cassocks, with the dim daylight falling on them through the narrow window, darkened by an iron grating, they were enveloped in a kind of twilight, and as they chanted in their soft melodious bass voices they seemed like early Christians secretly carrying out their services in tenebrous caves. My pilgrims were caught up in a religious atmosphere which, though vague, was penetrated with mysterious significance. Pyotr Mikhailich stood at their head, his face reflecting peaceful tranquillity. Pelageya Evgrafovna took up her place in a corner behind the choir at the left—she did not like praying in front of others. Nastenka went with her and dropped to her knees, praying fervently and glancing every now and then at Kalinovich, who stood next to the choir at the right. When the service was over Pyotr Mikhailich went up to the Father Superior.

"We wish to have a special service for the saint, Father," he said.

"It shall be done," replied the Father Superior briefly. Even this was a concession—he usually merely inclined his head in answer. He was fond of Pyotr Mikhailich and had actually been his guest on certain occasions.

"A service," he said to the monks behind the choir and

all trooped into the small niche in the church where the relics of the saint were enshrined. The service began by the monks intoning quietly for some time. Then they suddenly broke out in loud chorus: "We praise Thee, O Lord—to Thee, O Lord, we make our plea," and Nastenka bowed to the ground, bursting into almost hysterical sobs, so that Pelageya Evgrafovna had to go to her and help her to her feet. After the service they all went up to kiss the cross and receive the Father Superior's blessing. Pyotr Mikhailich was the first to do so.

"How are you?" asked the Father Superior with kindly abruptness.

"Quite well, Holy Father," replied Pyotr Mikhailich. "Bless this young man too—he's our new Russian writer," he added, pointing to Kalinovich.

The Father Superior gave the latter his blessing and then, fixing a piercing gaze on him, suddenly asked:

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-seven," replied Kalinovich, somewhat surprised by the question.

"You look older," said the Father Superior, and turning to Nastenka he looked at her steadily.

"Why did you weep?" he asked.

"From excess of feeling, Father Superior," replied Nastenka.

"There's nothing to cry about during service, unless you weep for your sins, and your voluntary and involuntary acts," said the Father Superior, and he blessed Pelageya Evgrafovna, after which he removed his cape.

Nastenka flushed.

"Well, good-bye. Go home. It's time to lock up," he concluded and left them abruptly, followed by the monks.

When our pilgrims left the monastery it was already past eight. Kalinovich, taking advantage of the fact that it was dark and slippery, offered Nastenka his arm, and

they began to fall behind Pyotr Mikailich and Pelageya Evgrafovna.

"You know nothing about it, Commander," he said to her, "but this is a joyful day for us."

"And why?" asked the housekeeper.

"I'll tell you why—our Yakov Vasilich's book has come out, and he'll get five hundred silver rubles for it."

Pyotr Mikhailich laid special emphasis on the five hundred silver rubles, so as to make an impression on Pelageya Evgrafovna, but she merely sighed and murmured:

"He'll look after his own affairs, and he'll abandon us."

Pyotr Mikhailich paused to think for a few moments.

"We have had a talk about that with him, Ma'am," he said. "Not outspoken, perhaps, but indirect. I myself led the conversation to it, I confess. . . . My brother has upset me. . . . There was that trouble between him and Kalinovich, he has noticed their goings-on, you know, and it worries him. . . ."

"What was your conversation with him?" asked Pelageya Evgrafovna.

"It was this way," replied Pyotr Mikhailich. "We argued whether it was better for young people to marry or not to marry. And he said: 'It's base to marry for money, but for a poor man to marry a poor girl is folly.'"

"H'm," said Pelageya Evgrafovna.

"What's to be done about it, then?" I asked," continued the old man, throwing out his arms. "He said: 'A rich man can do as he likes, but a poor man must first make his way, so that when he does marry there will be something to live on. . . .' Make what you like of it. Take it home and think it over."

"What's there to think about? There's nothing to think over," replied Pelageya Evgrafovna irritably.

"Ah, but one might suppose it to mean that he has taken no decisive step because Nastenka has very little and he still less," rejoined Pyotr Mikhailich. "But now,

thank God, as well as the payment for their books, writers get much better posts than ordinary people. He may be left as inspector a couple of years, and suddenly made director. And then there would be enough to support a family."

"To support a family," repeated Pelageya Evgrafovna mockingly. "There's enough for that as it is. He wouldn't be taking a dowerless girl. . . . There may not be much, but it's more than he has himself. Why shouldn't he earn a living with a brain like his?"

"It's just because his brain's so good that he wants to act cautiously, and I respect him for it," said Pyotr Mikhailich, "and as for brother Flegont's fears," he continued meditatively, as if trying to console himself, "that harm may come of it—that's all nonsense! Kalinovich is an honest man and he's in love with Nastenka."

"He's in love," agreed Pelageya Evgrafovna.

Some such ideas were apparently shared by the fat district police commissary, who was returning to town from some petty inquiry, an old bachelor, notoriously a sworn foe to the female sex, so much so that he actually drove away with contumely soldiers' brides when they came to show him their passports. As he passed the young people he stopped and gazed at them for some minutes and then, apparently astonished by the emotion arousing his usually hard heart, chuckled, rubbed his nose and assumed an expression of cunning as if to say: "We were all young once!"

"Are you happy today?" asked Nastenka as they approached the house.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich. "And I owe this happiness entirely to your family."

"Why to us? I think you owe it to your talent," remarked Nastenka.

"What's the good of talent?" continued Kalinovich. "I found in your family a hearty welcome, love, and, finally,

support in my most important undertaking. It will be long before I can pay you back."

"Love me—that will be payment enough."

"I neither can *nor should* stop loving you," said Kalinovich, stressing the word "should."

"Should!" echoed Nastenka and paused for thought. "If ever you did I would not survive it, I would die," she added and tears flowed down her cheeks in copious streams.

"What are you crying for? This could never happen, unless. . ."

"Unless what?"

"Unless I were to undergo a moral change," replied Kalinovich.

"I trust you," said Nastenka, pressing his arm warmly.

For some time they walked on in silence.

"You know, I can't help thinking," said Kalinovich, frowning, "that your people are beginning to dislike me, and to regard me with suspicious eyes."

"What people? The Captain?" asked Nastenka.

"I don't mean only the Captain. He has long detested me, though why, I do not know. But even your father. . . . He tries to conceal it, but I continually notice the displeasure in his face, especially when you and I are alone, and even Pelageya Evgrafovna looks at me askance."

Nastenka sighed.

"They guess at our relations," she said.

"How can they guess? I only behave with common politeness to you in front of others—nothing more."

"You ask—how! From everything. You are a little more careful, but I fret terribly when you are away."

"Why do you?"

"How strange you are! Why? Can I help it if I am unable to conceal my feelings? And why should I? They all know anyhow. The other day my uncle tried to persuade my father not to receive you any more."

Kalinovich frowned still more heavily.

"The Captain is odious," he said.

"No, he's very kind. He doesn't say all he knows," rejoined Nastenka with a sigh. "But what annoys me most of all," she continued, "is his prejudice against you. He seems to be convinced that you will deceive me."

"How well he knows me!" said Kalinovich with a short laugh.

"He can't understand you. And how can he be expected to?" replied Nastenka.

Presently they arrived at the house, where the Captain was expecting them.

"I hear you've been to the monastery, brother," he said to Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Yes, Captain, yes, Sir, we've been to the monastery," replied Pyotr Mikhailich. "Yakov Vasilich wished to have a thanksgiving service held. His book has come out and is a great success, and today we are, so to speak, celebrating his victory. It's like when you military gents take a fortress. It's glory for you—and now it's glory for us."

"Why yes, of course," agreed the Captain.

"But, Pyotr Mikhailich, I simply must drink champagne," said Kalinovich.

"Champagne?" repeated the old man. "It would be a sin, Sir. Are we to break our fast because of your joy?"

"It seems to me you are the best judge of that, esteemed Pelageya Evgrafovna," said Kalinovich, turning to the housekeeper, who was laying the table for tea.

"She's the one," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich. "Get us a bottle of champagne, Commander."

Kalinovich gave Pelageya Evgrafovna some money, at the same time smiling and pressing her hand. He had never before been so polite to the old maid, and she actually blushed.

"And while you're about it get something for supper, something tasty, you know," added Pyotr Mikhailich.

"We'll find something," replied Pelageya Evgrafovna and departed on her mission.

First she scribbled on a scrap of paper the words: "Pottle of shimpan" in a most frightful scrawl and then set about waking Grater, who was asleep on the bench. Pyotr Mikhailich had taken him in out of sheer pity when he was dismissed from the school, and the invalid did nothing but lie on the stove or on the bench, even refusing to fetch water for the cook, scold as she might. It cost Pelageya Evgrafovna no small exertions to wake him, and, this done, to explain matters to him.

"The shop's shut," said the invalid.

"You've got hands, haven't you, old laggard? Knock! Be off with you! Hurry now! There'll be plenty of time to sleep. The night is long," said Pelageya Evgrafovna.

"Just try to sleep!" muttered Grater and he took a long time pulling on his boots and getting into his old uniform.

"You hound, you! Are you going or are you not?" cried Pelageya Evgrafovna in despair.

"Give it here, then," replied Grater and, taking the note firmly in his hand, shambled off, while Pelageya Evgrafovna instructed the cook to prepare the trivet, and started cooking herself.

In about half an hour's time Grater returned, empty-handed but for the note.

"I knocked and I knocked," he said, calmly taking off his coat and clambering on to the bench.

Pelageya Evgrafovna's only answer was to spit angrily.

"What do they keep the old parasite for?" she exclaimed, throwing her old cloak round her shoulders—for what else could she do?—and setting out to arouse the shopkeeper herself. By eleven, supper was ready. The promised "something" turned out to be: pickled pike, freshly salted sturgeon with white sauce, dried bream, fried

smoked herring, and all laid out neatly on the great round table.

"Pelageya Evgrafovna has prepared a truly Roman supper for us," said Kalinovich anxious to say something civil to the housekeeper again. And when they all sat down to table he insisted that she should do so, too, and not keep jumping up. Altogether he was in the best of spirits.

Before beginning on the bream, Pyotr Mikhailich, filling everyone's glass, pronounced in solemn accents: "To the health of our young, talented author!" and drank the contents of his own in a single gulp. Nastenka, who was next to Kalinovich, pressed his hand and drank off her glass, too. The Captain took half of his, and Pelageya Evgrafovna just sipped at hers. Noticing this, Pyotr Mikhailich compelled them to finish their portions. The Captain drained his glass in silence; Pelageya Evgrafovna, exclaiming: "Oh, what a headache I shall have!" drank hers a little at a time, till she had finished it off.

"Now allow *me* to give a toast!" said Kalinovich, getting up and filling up the glasses all round. "To the health of one of the best critics of Russian literature, and my first literary patron," he continued, stretching out his hand to clink glasses with Pyotr Mikhailich, and then: "To the health of my little friend!" he continued, turning to Nastenka and kissing her hand.

He had often jokingly called Nastenka his little friend in front of them all.

"And to the health of the brave Captain!" he added, bowing to Flegont Mikhailich, "and your health"—addressing Pelageya Evgrafovna.

"Hurrah!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich.

They all drank.

"Captain," said Pyotr Mikhailich, turning to his brother, "Extend your warlike hand to our author. Apollo and

Mars should abide in friendship. Yakov Vasilich, clink glasses with him!"

"Delighted!" replied Kalinovich, and, hastily pouring out champagne for himself and the Captain, took him by the hand and pressed it warmly. The Captain, however, did not reply in the same spirit.

"May all misunderstandings between you come to an end, may there be peace and agreement among us all in future!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I trust that in time, when Flegont Mikhailich comes to know me better, he will change his opinion of me," said Kalinovich.

"And I, too," responded the Captain, with a side glance at Nastenka. "You are an educated man...."

For all reply Kalinovich once more pressed the Captain's hand.

Thus ended the little banquet, at which all rejoiced so cordially in Kalinovich's success.

"There *are* good, kind people in the world!" he said to himself, returning to his dwelling, wrapped in thought.



Part Two

I

WHILE THESE remarkable happenings were going on in my little world, one unpleasant occurrence followed another in the house of Madame Shevalova, the General's widow. First, and God knows what the cause was, she had a stroke, which, though it passed without any special consequences, undoubtedly affected her mental powers. The police superintendent's wife, who had succeeded in worming her way into the house, reported that Mademoiselle Paulina was completely unhinged. Since she loved

her mother she suffered more than the patient herself, especially since she was unable to persuade her to go to Moscow, or at least to the district town to consult a doctor. Her mother would not hear of it. "She has become stingier than ever since her illness," added the gossip, in the strictest secrecy. A fresh unpleasantness overlooked the old woman in the second week of Lent. Mediokritsky, who was her legal adviser, lost his post and had been drinking continually for the last fortnight in a certain tavern. Madame Shevalova, unaware of this, had entrusted him, as she had often done before, to fetch her a thousand rubles which had been sent to the post-office for her. He obtained the money, but had not put in an appearance since, and was actually in hiding somewhere out of town. Judge of the shock this insolence and the loss of such a considerable sum must have been to the sick woman! Again she had something like a paralytic stroke, and Mademoiselle Paulina was fairly worn out. In her despair she wrote a brief urgent note to Count Ivan and had it taken to him secretly, by a messenger. The Count arrived the very next day. The old lady, who had not really expected him, was delighted to see him. It only took him about a quarter of an hour to talk her over and pacify her, so that she was ready to move from her bedroom to the drawing-room, after which the Count left to pay a few calls.

Since this personage is destined to play quite an important part in the development of my story, I consider it necessary to say something about him here and now. Once adjutant to a general in the Guards who prided himself on his adjutants, he was now an extremely well-to-do landed proprietor, and considered one of the most distinguished individuals in the neighbourhood. Despite his fifty years, the Count might still be described with perfect justice as remarkably handsome and an extremely presentable individual. He was a little bald already,

which, by the way, suited him wonderfully, of medium height, moderately plump, with small, fine hands, always dressed youthfully, elegantly and tastefully, and his pleasing address was slightly reminiscent of some frivolous, but delightful marquis. With this appearance the Count combined the most charming, the most courteous manners. Acquainted with almost the whole gubernia, he was usually scrupulously polite, with a touch of deference, to wealthy landowners and important functionaries. To the poorer gentry and less important officials he was exaggeratedly friendly and obliging, seldom saying anything that was not pleasant and flattering. He was never heard to speak harshly or derisively of anyone, although he was very fond of perpetrating witticisms, at which he was also very good (in French)—but never at anyone's expense. Nobody who made a request to him—whether it was some small proprietor's widow who begged him with floods of bitter tears to get her children into a school when he went to Petersburg, or a lousy clerk caught taking bribes who appealed to him for protection—ever met with a refusal. Whether these promises came to anything is another matter. For the greater part, owing to circumstances, they were not fulfilled. The Count also possessed an extraordinary ability to guess at sight the ruling passion of every new acquaintance, and always managed to turn the conversation to the subjects of greatest interest to his interlocutor. In consequence, all new acquaintances, especially such as might for some reason or other be useful to the Count, were invariably enchanted by him. Seven successive governors considered him a man of the utmost nobility, and devoted to themselves, and sought every opportunity to do him a favour. The other authorities, too, from the heads of government offices to the lowest clerk in the town hall, were eager to do anything they could for him, within their sphere. In the country, the Count lived like a proper

squire. Of his four children, two sons were in the Guards, and his eldest daughter was surrounded from her very cradle by German, French and English governesses, at the cost of thousands of rubles. The Count himself spent two or three months almost every year in Petersburg, and had actually, a couple of years before, on his wife falling ill, taken his family to a foreign spa, where they stayed throughout the summer. The Count might have been expected to have ruined himself by such an extravagant scale of living, especially since his father, a notorious spendthrift, had only left him about three hundred souls, and those mortgaged. He was married to a charming, highly-educated lady, a beauty in her day, and a singer, but got nothing with her. Despite all this, however, not only was he not ruined, but he had actually become richer, and now had, not three hundred, but over a thousand serfs. Of course the gubernia was full of vaguely sinister rumours—it was hinted, for example, that a certain vast estate of which the Count was the guardian had yielded him enormous profits; that he had taken part, on funds contributed by the local gentry, in building a house which subsequently collapsed; that in Petersburg he was a member of a firm in which all who invested lost their capital irrevocably; that a former benefactor of his, a very important and distinguished personage who had loved him as his own son, had suddenly thrown him over, forbidding his name to be so much as mentioned in his presence. Last but not least, people insinuated that his relations with the General's widow and daughter were extremely close. Some stressed the fact that the Count's every word was law for the old woman, and that though she trembled over every kopek, for him she grudged no expense, and, as the stockbroker's books showed, had given him twenty thousand silver rubles against his bill of exchange, five years ago; others declared that Mademoiselle Paulina was even more in-

time with the Count—they would sit together for hours in the study after the old woman had gone to bed . . . and so on and so forth. Of course most of the Count's friends did not believe all this gossip, or if there were some who did believe it in part or even knew it to be true, they took care not to spread it, since most of them, if not actually under obligation to him, had at least been treated kindly by him.

After sitting with the old lady for a short while, the Count set off, as usual, to call on some of his friends in the town, beginning with a visit to the government offices where, not finding anyone in the district police court, he uttered a few civil words to the secretary, bowed in a friendly manner to a messenger seated in the doorway and, coming across the superintendent of police in the street, expressed the most spontaneous, cordial joy and held him by his two hands about five minutes, pressing them warmly. Turning into the principal street, the Count met Pyotr Mikhailich and raised his hat to him from the distance, bowing and smiling. Pyotr Mikhailich, for his part, went up to him, bowing and scraping respectfully. He respected the Count and always spoke of him thus: "A Talleyrand, Sir—the Talleyrand of our days."

"How are you?" said the Count, pressing Pyotr Mikhailich's hand kindly.

"As well as ever, I thank you," replied the latter.

"I'm very, very glad to have met you," continued the Count.

Pyotr Mikhailich bowed.

"You have not deigned to honour our town for a long time, Your Excellency," he said.

"Too busy," replied the Count. "I suppose everything is going on as usual here, that is to say, everything is flourishing," he added.

"Why, yes," agreed Pyotr Mikhailich. "What changes

can there be here? And yet," he continued, fixing a steady gaze on the Count's face, "there is one quite important change. Are you acquainted with the new inspector of the school?"

"Of course, of course. I know him, I've met him. Seems to be a very good sort of young man."

"He is," answered Pyotr Mikhailich. "And now he has written a novel which is famous all over Russia," he added, a little uncertainly.

"Fancy that!" exclaimed the Count. "A novell!"

"You may even have read it—it's called *Strange Relations*," said Pyotr Mikhailich respectfully.

"Yes, yes, I've read it—I recognized the name. I racked my brains over it for at least half an hour and couldn't remember where I'd come across it. Very well written, very well written."

This was an utter lie. Not only had the Count not read Kalinovich's novel, it is highly unlikely that he had ever read anything whatever but the newspapers for the last twenty years.

"The critics have nothing but praise for him," continued Pyotr Mikhailich in more assured tones. "And it makes me still happier," he added, putting his head on one side in his usual manner, "that you, a cultivated man, so familiar with foreign literature, should speak of it in this way, for there are certain gentry who refuse to take any notice of it, and even laugh at it."

The Count shook his head.

"Fancyl!" he said.

"Ah, well! A prophet is not without honour save in his own country," sighed Pyotr Mikhailich.

"But why? For my part I shall go to see Mr. Kalinovich at once and thank him for the pleasure he has given me. Good-bye."

With these words the Count shook the old man's hand warmly again and proceeded on his way.

It should here be stated that ever since the joyful tidings had come from Petersburg concerning the publication of Kalinovich's novel, Pyotr Mikhailich had busied himself in spreading his young friend's fame, and his heart was so full of the subject that the very next Sunday he turned the conversation to it with an old merchant, a churchwarden, as they came out from morning service together.

"Some of you merchants neglect to educate your children," he began. "That's too bad."

The churchwarden, an old-fashioned, hard-headed, niggardly, but sage, not to say cunning old fellow, feeling that this was aimed at him, put his head on one side and settled down to listen with his right ear, for the left was deaf, though he could feign complete deafness when necessary.

"Take my successor, the inspector," continued Pyotr Mikhailich. "He is an orphan, and penniless, and yet, thanks to his education, he has become an author. So now he'll be rich and famous."

The merchant merely shrugged his shoulders.

"To everyone, Sir, his own fortune," he said, sighing, and raising his peaked cap, he added: "Excuse me, Your Honour!" and turned into the street where he lived, disappearing behind the ponderous oaken gate, bolting it, lowering the latch, and letting the dog off its chain.

Attributing such indifference to nothing but the ignorance of the Russian merchant class, Pyotr Mikhailich, going to the post-office to send off a letter that same day, did not fail to begin on his favourite subject with the postmaster, whom he considered to be the next-best educated person after himself.

"Do you know my successor?" he inquired.

"He came to see me, Sir," replied the other, and for some reason he sighed.

"He's written a book, and it's famous all over Russia."

"What sort of book? Oh, Lord, have mercy!" said the postmaster, glancing rapidly at the icon, as usual.

"A romantic one."

The postmaster looked at Pyotr Mikhailich through his glasses for a short time, with an expression of something like pity.

"It's time for you and me, at our age, to be reading other books," he said.

"Well, I read both sorts," replied Pyotr Mikhailich, obviously disconcerted by this remark, and then, after standing about, shifting his weight from one foot to another, he took his leave.

"He's a clever old fellow, but very one-sided," he said to himself as he went home. But these experiences were not enough to prevent him, when going to the treasury to draw his pension a few days later, from speaking to the treasurer about Kalinovich.

"Does the new inspector come himself to put the cash-box in the safe?" he asked casually.

"Yes," said the treasurer, and hiccupped.

"He's written a novel, and they're giving him six hundred rubles just for a few folios."

Pyotr Mikhailich hoped to astonish his hearer by this sum, as he had Pelageya Evgrafovna. But the treasurer did not seem to be impressed, and only hiccupped again. Godnev at last realized that the subject did not interest the treasurer in the least, and got up to go.

"Good-bye," he said.

"Good-bye," said the treasurer, and hiccupped again.

"A hiccup to you!" thought Pyotr Mikhailich. But aloud he said: "You must have upset your digestion—do you always hiccup?"

"It only means somebody is thinking about me," replied the treasurer.

Coming out into the porch, Pyotr Mikhailich stood for some moments in thought. "I'll try again," he said, and

made his way to the Zemstvo Court where he found quite a large company assembled: the superintendent of police, the permanent member, and besides these, the judge and clerk, who had left their court to sit for a while in the Zemstvo. The secretary, still a young man only just beginning his career in the provinces, cast friendly glances around him. The two red-haired clerks, who were exact replicas of Mediokritsky and, like him, young men with excellent handwriting, were standing at the glazed door of the office, deeply interested in something that was going on.

All were watching in absorption a certain Prokhorov, a sixty-year-old landowner of enormous stature who had just arrived in the town. By way of illustrating some argument about military service, he was marching up and down, performing various manoeuvres with a poker for a rifle. The judge was slapping his own thighs and calling out: "One, two! One, two!" Prokhorov, the sweat rolling down his cheeks in great drops, marched up and down conscientiously. "Halt!" commanded the judge. Prokhorov halted. "Eyes left!" shouted the judge. Prokhorov rolled his bovine eyes a little to the left. "Charge for twenty rounds!" commanded the judge. Prokhorov first pretended to be taking out a cartridge which he proceeded to bite before placing it in the barrel of his gun and fixing the ramrod, and then, raising the trigger, took aim. "Fire!" shouted the judge. Prokhorov "fired" with his mouth. "Does it well," remarked the permanent member to the clerk. "He certainly does!" agreed the latter.

Most people would think it rather inappropriate and perfectly useless to start talking about literature in such company, but Pyotr Mikhailich could not refrain, and perceiving on the window-sill that very newspaper which had praised Kalinovich, he picked it up and gabbled out:

"Here's something about a gentleman living in our town!" after which he proceeded to read the whole review aloud.

This little trick of his made them all look down and fall silent, as if the old man had said something foolish or perpetrated some indecent act.

"You learned gentlemen no doubt know all about books," said Prokhorov, standing at attention with his poker.

This seemed insulting to Pyotr Mikhailich.

"What d'you mean by saying I know all about books?" he cried. "There's nothing wrong with books, Sir! I don't think there's anything to laugh at, is there?"

"What then—are we to *cry* about your books?" asked Prokhorov jestingly.

Everyone laughed.

Pyotr Mikhailich hastened away without another word.

For a whole month he said not a word about Kalinovich to anybody, and even, as we have seen, touched on the matter to the Count with a certain caution. The latter's politeness immediately redeemed all his failures in this respect, and the old man was moved to the depths of his soul. Hearing the bell for late service, he went into the church to express his thankfulness to God for some signs of education having at last reached the provinces, where the gentry had formerly consisted of rakes, dog-fanciers, gamblers, people who never opened a book.

In the meanwhile the Count paid a call on Kalinovich, after which he drew up in front of the house of the old-maid proprietor where, at her request, and to ease her mind, he admonished the two red-cheeked maids severely, bidding them to serve their mistress well and not to do again whatever it was they had done.

All this time there was the greatest excitement in the house of the General's widow, on account of the guest's arrival—the housekeeper weighed out sugar, the footmen

filled the lamps with oil and got out the tallow candles, the lean butler bought up all the big fish in the shops, as well as the very best beef, and fetched some very expensive Rhine wine from the cellar. (The Count was quite a *gourmet* and drank nothing at table except the best Rhine wine.) By one o'clock Madame Shevalova had left her bedroom for the drawing-room, and was seated on her favourite corner sofa, propped up with cushions. A pile of books and a huge packet of chocolates lay on the shelf beneath the mirror. The books had been brought by the Count from his library for Mademoiselle Paulina and the chocolates were intended for the General's widow, who was a real sweet-tooth. The Count had an excellent confectioner and constantly rejoiced the old lady by sending her a few pounds of sweets. Mademoiselle Paulina, whom the arrival of the Count had considerably enlivened and relieved, was pouring out coffee from a silver coffee-pot into costly porcelain cups, set out on a silver tray. The Count settled himself comfortably in a well-padded arm-chair. The General's widow regarded him with languid affection, and then turned her eyes to the coffee cups.

"Come now, Paulina, I must have some coffee!" she declared.

Since her illness the old lady had acquired a ferocious appetite.

"Mama!" cried Paulina in a voice which was half-reproachful, half-imploring.

The old lady, shrugging her shoulders, turned away from her daughter. Mademoiselle Paulina shook her head and sighed.

"A little cup of coffee doesn't matter, really it doesn't," said the Count.

"That's just what I say, but what am I to do if Paulina considers everything is bad for me?" protested the

old lady in a complaining voice. Mademoiselle Paulina smiled mournfully and poured out a cup.

"There you are, *Maman*," she said, handing the cup to her mother. "It's only for your own good...."

The old lady began sipping the coffee with slow relish, at the same time nibbling at a slice of white bread.

"The coffee's good," she said.

"A glass of water, *ma tante*, you simply must drink a glass of water! Never neglect that rule!" said the Count, shaking his finger at her playfully.

"I consent," she replied, as if making a great concession.

Mademoiselle Paulina rang the bell. The footman came in.

"Quite cold?" she said, turning to the Count.

"As cold as possible," said he.

"A glass of cold water for Mama," she said.

The footman went out and returned with the water. Mademoiselle Paulina tried it herself first, touching the glass with her finger-tips.

"It's cold enough, I think," she said, addressing the Count.

He too touched the glass with his hand.

"Just right," he said, and handed it to his hostess.

The old lady drank half of it.

"Enough," she said.

"No, *ma tante*, the whole, you must drink it all, you know," objected the Count.

"Drink it up, *Maman*, or the coffee may do you harm," said Paulina.

The General's widow finished it unwillingly.

"You'll kill me with your cures," she said, and her eyes turned slowly towards the chocolates on the table.

"Give me one sweet from your present, for obeying to you, my dear," she said.

"Ought you to before dinner?" put in Paulina.

"Never mind, they're quite harmless," said the Count and gave the old lady not one, but three sweets.

She nibbled at them in delight, till her head gradually drooped and she slept.

"A child, just a child," whispered the Count.

Mademoiselle Paulina sighed.

"Just a child," repeated the Count and moving to a chair at some distance he lit a cigar.

Paulina sat down beside him. For some time the Count looked at her with evident sympathy.

"How thin you've become, Cousin! Dear, dear!" he said softly.

Paulina smiled mournfully.

"The wonder is that I'm still alive, Count," she said in undertones. "To have gone through, to have suffered what I have suffered all this time—I can't tell you. Five years in this wretched town, where I never see a human face! And now this illness! Not a moment of peace day or night! Continual whims! Continual complaints! And then this odious stinginess! It's intolerable, I tell you! Sometimes I feel ready to do God knows what."

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"Patience and again patience, every ill is bound to come to an end at last, and the end of this one is not far, I think," he said, his eyes turning towards the General's widow.

"Patience! It's all very well for you! Of course when you come I am happy, but even our relations are appalling, whatever you say. I simply must get married."

"And what about Moscow?" asked the Count.

"Nothing will come of it. I knew it would all end in nothing. She simply grudges my dowry. She answered his first letter very nicely, but as soon as he hinted at my fortune, you should have seen her. She was beside

herself, abusing me and writing him such a rude letter, you can't imagine."

"*Oh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" said the Count, raising his eyes to the ceiling.

"I haven't a penny to buy pins with now," continued Paulina. "It's something awful. My late father's five hundred souls are mine by law. I've been wanting to consult you about it for a long time, Cousin—couldn't I get this fortune for myself by law? It's mine, isn't it?"

During this monologue the Count frowned.

"It's yours, and you could get it by law any minute," he said emphatically. "But think, Cousin, of the terrible harm it would do, of the gossip—you a girl, and to come forward against your own mother!"

"But if I were to get married it would be only natural. I must have something to live on with my husband."

The Count nodded his agreement.

"In that case, everything would of course be different," he said. "You would then have a family of your own, a separate existence. Whether she liked it or not, she would have to give you what's due to you. But, *chère cousine*," he continued, shrugging his shoulders, "you must first get married, even if you have to run away to do it. But to whom? What's to be done in a Godforsaken hole like this? I keep going over the local *partis* in my mind—and can find no one, no one! Anyone with a good position and at all superior has no desire to marry, and the rest of the young men are such that, far from marrying any of them, one would be ashamed to receive them in one's house."

Paulina's reply to this was a sigh.

"I foresee," she said, "that it is my fate to perish here.... What if I am rich, a General's daughter, what if my diamonds alone are worth a hundred thousand? I'm worse off than any clerk's daughter here—they at least have certain pleasures...."

At these last words tears appeared in Paulina's eyes.

"Good heavens!" she continued, "I demand neither wealth, distinction nor rank from my future husband—all I ask is that he should be a gentleman and love me, that he should find something in me to love...."

At that moment the old lady yawned and half opened her eyes.

"Are you there, Paulina?" she said.

"Here I am, *Maman!*" replied Paulina, and rising at once she left the Count and went over to the table on which the books lay.

"What are you doing?" asked her mother.

"I'm looking at some books."

"What books?"

"The ones the Count brought," replied Paulina irritably.

"What books did he bring?" asked the old woman.

"Magazines, *ma tante*, magazines," put in the Count and then, striking his forehead as if he had just remembered something, he turned to Paulina: "By the way, you'll find among them a story or novel by one of your local gentry, the inspector of the municipal school. I haven't read it myself, but I see the papers praise it."

Mademoiselle Paulina tried to recollect who this could be.

"Inspector?" she repeated, narrowing her eyes. "He came to see us, I think."

"Oh, did he?" asked the Count.

"Yes, yes! But *Maman* received him coldly, and he never came again."

"What are you talking about?" asked the old woman.

"Literature, *ma tante*, literature," replied the Count, and, putting his hand to his brow again, he smiled and said softly to Paulina: "*Voilà notre homme*. Take him up, entertain him, he is *très comme il faut*."

Paulina, too, smiled.

"I'm quite willing," she replied. "By the way, I liked him that time—I thought him very nice."

"He's very nice," confirmed the Count.

"Is dinner ready?" asked the old woman.

Mademoiselle Paulina shrugged her shoulders.

"We've only just had coffee, *Maman*."

"It's too early, *ma tante*, much too early. It's not one yet," said the Count, looking at his watch.

The old woman made a grimace of discontent and seemed to fall into a doze again.

"I called at his house just now, and tomorrow he will probably return my visit," said the Count.

Paulina, though still looking sad, smiled.

II

As soon as he came home after work at the school, Kalinovich noticed the Count's visiting-card, which his landlady had stuck in the frame of the looking-glass as she had seen done by wealthy gentlefolk. She could not, however, bring herself to speak to him, for she had not so much as acknowledged his greetings for the past six months, and if she did not turn him out of her house it was simply for fear of offending Pelageya Evgrafovna. On the back of the card were the words, in the Count's hand: "*I looked in to thank the author for the pleasure he has given me.*" Kalinovich glanced with a smile at the surname and inscription, paused for a moment to think, and then removed his worn uniform, shaved carefully, oiled and combed his hair, donned a black suit, and went out. He looked in at the Godnevs first. Nastenka was waiting for him as usual at the window of the drawing-room and was as usual delighted to see him. She took him by the hand and made him sit down at her side.

"Why are you so grand today?" she asked.

"For no special reason," replied Kalinovich and then, after a pause, added: "I've had an unexpected visitor."

"Who?" asked Nastenka.

In reply Kalinovich handed her the Count's card. She looked at the name and read the inscription, smiling.

"How polite! A pity it's too late!"

"Too late?" echoed Kalinovich.

"Of course it is. You're no cleverer, no better, because your novel has been published. Why didn't he call on you, seek your acquaintance, before?"

"But he was always very polite to me and I always wished to know him better. He's a very clever man."

Nastenka shook her head doubtfully.

"I don't know," she said. "I've only seen him twice. He has a jesuitical look. I don't like him. He must be very cunning."

Kalinovich did not contradict her, only assuming an expression which seemed to say: "Everyone has a right to his own opinion."

In the meantime Pyotr Mikhailich had come home too and gone to his room to change. Hearing Kalinovich's voice he called out: "Is that you, Kalinovich? You've had a visitor—the Count's been to call on you."

"I know," replied Kalinovich.

"What do you intend to do?" continued the old man, coming into the room. "Eh—you've changed your clothes—that's good! Go and call on him, Sir, go at once! Oh, how he lauds you to the skies."

"Why at once?" objected Nastenka. "Why should he hasten to bow down before him the moment he raises his little finger? A fine benefactor! I call it ridiculous!"

"Ridiculous? A lot you understand!" interrupted Pyotr Mikhailich. "Why should he call on him! I'll tell you why. Because courtesy demands it, and what's more, the

Count is as it were an outsider, and might be of use to Yakov Vasilich."

"I should like to know what use he could be to Yakov Vasilich! Kindly tell me that, I'm afraid I can't see it."

Pyotr Mikhailich lost his temper.

"Oh yes, you can, it's nothing but your pride speaking!" he cried, banging on the table. "You think we ought to turn away from everyone who takes an interest in us. You think we're the only decent people in the world. Take no notice of her, Yakov Vasilich—she's only a foolish girl," he added, turning to Kalinovich.

"I think I ought to go," said the latter.

Nastenka looked at him.

"Go!" put in the old man. "But it's so muddy underfoot! I'll order the carriage for you!" and he hastened out of the room.

"So you're going?" asked Nastenka.

"Of course I am," replied Kalinovich.

"And if I ask you not to?"

"Strange request!" said Kalinovich.

"Never mind if it is, but if I do—d'you mean to say you wouldn't sacrifice such a trifle for me?"

"I see no need for any sacrifice. I am bound to return his call, and I shall do so. There's nothing special in that, is there?"

"Perhaps there isn't. But I don't want you to go. The Count is staying at the Shevalovs', and I hate that house. You said yourself they received you coldly that time. What pleasure will it give you, who are so sensitive, to be met with coldness again?"

"It's not Madame Shevalova I'm going to see, she's nothing to me, it's the Count. And I didn't take the first step, I'm only returning his visit."

"Don't go, darling, don't go, my dear one! I demand this of you! Stay with us all day! I won't let you go! I want to look at you! You're so handsome today!"

With these words Nastenka took his hand.

"I'll be back in less than a quarter of an hour," he replied.

"I won't have it—d'you hear me?" cried Nastenka.

"It's nothing but a whim, and a silly whim," said Kalinovich, frowning.

"No, Jacques, it's no whim, it's a foreboding. The moment you said the Count had called on you my heart sank, as if this acquaintance were fraught with misfortune for you and me. Once more I beg you—don't go to the Shevalovs, don't return the Count's call! These people will ruin us both!"

"Now we've got to forebodings! Now it's a matter of forebodings!" said Kalinovich. "But since I don't believe in forebodings a bit, I shall go," he added, laughing.

"I have long known that your slightest wish is more to you than any suffering of mine," said Nastenka.

"In that case, what's the good of talking?" said Kalinovich.

Nastenka blushed scarlet.

"Listen, Kalinovich," she said, "if you're going to talk to me like that ..." (her voice trembled, and tears came into her eyes). "Don't you dare to talk to me like that! I have sacrificed all to you ... don't trifle with my love, Kalinovich, if you treat me like this I'll never get over it, I'll die, I tell you, cruel man!"

"Enough of this, Nastenka! What's the matter with you?" cried Kalinovich, trying to take her hand, which, however, she pulled away.

"Get out, I don't want your caresses!" she said, and rose to go, but stopped in the doorway.

"If you go to the Count, then don't come back here, either today, or tomorrow, or ever. I can't stand you—selfish man!"

Kalinovich made a face. Nastenka turned on her heel and went out.

Just then Pyotr Mikhailich came back, calling out from the door:

"The carriage is ready. Off you go!"

"I am much obliged to you," replied Kalinovich and went into the porch, putting on his coat.

There awaited him the very same carriage in which, a year ago, he had made his calls. But in the winter, thieves had torn the leather from it, making it look still more dilapidated. The horse, too, was the same, but had grown fatter. On the driver's seat was the very same Grater. The thrifty Pelageya Evgrafovna had managed to get him installed as coachman, so that he should not eat off his head in idleness. In a word, the only difference was that this time Grater showed Kalinovich, whom he detested for dismissing him, no respect. He always took twice as long as necessary, when sent on errands, it usually took him two hours even to go to the neighbouring bakery for fresh rolls, and now he drove as slowly as if in a mourning coach. Kalinovich found this intolerably tedious.

"Faster!" he cried. "What are you dawdling for?"

"She won't go any faster," replied Grater laconically.

"Then whip her up."

"Oh no, I daren't do that! She doesn't like the lash—she kicks," said the invalid, giving the reins a slight shake, and continuing at a walk.

Kalinovich bore it as long as he could, but at last he lost his patience.

"Whip her up, I tell you!" he urged.

Grater said not a word.

"Whip her up, I tell you!" cried Kalinovich.

"I have no whip!" the invalid shouted back at him.

Kalinovich, seeing that there was no doing anything with Grater, got out of the carriage.

"You can drive back, I'm not going with you, you swine!" he cried, and continued on foot. Grater muttered

something, turned the horse's head as if nothing had happened, and drove back at a smart trot.

At the house of the General's widow Kalinovich was once more met by the liveried footman.

"Is His Excellency at home?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir," replied the footman, leading the way upstairs.

The Count and Paulina were seated in their former places in the drawing-room. Madame Shevalova was chewing at a stick of cinnamon to give herself a pleasant taste in her mouth. The footman announced Kalinovich.

"Speak of an angel!" said the Count, rising.

"Receive him here," said Paulina eagerly.

"I will," replied the Count and turned to the old lady.

"Kalinovich has come to see me, *ma tante*—he's an author. May I receive him in here?"

"What author?" asked the old lady, blinking.

"He was here a year ago, *Maman*," interposed Paulina.

"Where was he?" the old lady asked.

"Here, in your house," put in the Count.

"I didn't know he was—I don't remember," said the sick woman.

"You don't remember of course. You've forgotten. May I receive him here? He's a nice young man, and very clever," explained the Count.

"Why not? Since you speak well of him, I shall be very glad," she replied.

"Ask him to come in," said the Count to the footman, and walked towards the middle of the room, while Paulina rose and began hastily tidying her hair in front of the mirror.

Kalinovich appeared.

"I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for giving me this pleasure," began the Count, going to meet him,

and, taking both Kalinovich's hands in his own, he pressed them warmly.

"Do you know my hostesses?" he added.

Kalinovich replied that he had had the honour of being in their house once before.

"In that case, I will ask you to renew your acquaintance with them," said the Count and he led him further into the room.

"Monsieur Kalinovich," he said to Madame Shevalova, who, however, only blinked.

Mademoiselle Paulina, on the contrary, bowed to him very civilly.

"*Je vous prie, monsieur, prenez place,*" said the Count, pushing forward a chair for Kalinovich and sitting down next to him.

"Monsieur Kalinovich was unkind enough not to repeat his first visit to us," said Paulina in French.

Kalinovich, also speaking in French, replied that he had heard of her mother's illness and therefore had not ventured to trouble them. The Count and Paulina exchanged glances, they were both favourably impressed by the young inspector's apt rejoinder. The old lady only blinked, glancing with expressionless eyes from her daughter to the Count, from the Count to Kalinovich.

"It is true that *Maman* has been unwell the whole year, and has scarcely seen anyone," said Paulina.

"I feel a weakness in my arm, and my fingers are numb," the old lady told Kalinovich, showing him her flabby tremulous hand and closing her fingers.

"The feeling will come back in time, Your Excellency, it will pass," he replied.

"It will pass, of course it will," echoed the Count. "With God's help and cold baths in the country next summer, you'll see how lively you'll be, *ma tante*."

"Nothing tastes nice. . . . A bad taste in my mouth. . . . I don't like food I used to be fond of . . ." continued the

old woman, paying no heed to the Count's words and addressing Kalinovich again.

The latter assumed an expression of profound sympathy. A faint smile flitted over the Count's lips.

"Why, *Maman*, you have a very good appetite, you know—you get hungry, but it's bad for you to eat much," put in Paulina.

But the old woman paid no heed to her daughter's words, either. Pleased to have someone new to talk to about her illness, she again addressed Kalinovich.

"My leg is getting weak . . . I can't walk . . . It gives under me."

"And that'll pass, too, Your Excellency," he repeated.

"Do you think it will pass altogether?" asked the patient.

"I'm sure it will," replied Kalinovich. "My father was smitten with exactly the same illness, but he lived for fifteen years after it in perfect health."

"Only fifteen years, and then he died," said the old woman thoughtfully.

Kalinovich said nothing.

Once more an almost imperceptible smile flickered on the lips of the Count, and he glanced at Paulina.

"Do you find provincial life as boring as you feared?" Paulina asked Kalinovich with the obvious intention of putting an end to her mother's complaints.

"Monsieur Kalinovich has probably had no time to be bored this year," said the Count, "for he has been busy writing his splendid novel."

"It was written two years ago," said Kalinovich.

"Have you been writing long?" asked Paulina.

"Yes," answered Kalinovich.

"You were evidently in no hurry to publish," said the Count. "And that's excellent. The more exacting one is with oneself, the better. In literature, as in life, one rule should never be forgotten—you may have a thousand oc-

casions to regret having said too much, but not a single one for having said too little. Excellent. Excellent," he repeated, and after a pause added: "Now that you have entered that career so brilliantly, you probably have a great deal more written and planned."

"A great deal planned, but so far nothing sufficiently finished for me to decide on publishing," replied Kalinovich.

"Excellent, excellent," said the Count again. "Great as our impatience must be to read a new book by you, our desire that, having taken one successful step, you should be still more successful, is no less, and we will not venture to hurry you. Think, ponder . . . your first offering has made us expect from you something quite mature, something important. . . ."

Kalinovich bowed.

"I assure you this is true," continued the Count. "I speak not as a flatterer, but as a sincere admirer of talent."

"How hard it must be to write!" said Paulina. "I often think about it. Why, to judge by myself, one can sometimes hardly write a letter! And a whole novel has to be written! I suppose you can't think about anything else at such times, or you'd lose the thread at once, and begin to wander."

"I presume one has to have a special gift, *ma cousine*," put in the Count. "A lively fancy, a powerful imagination. In my roving life both in Russia and abroad, I have made the acquaintance of all sorts of writers and artists, from some mere provincial actor to Goethe, to whom I had the honour of being introduced as a Russian traveller, and I admit I always noticed in each of them something special, not like us mere mortals. And then, apart from their minds (I simply can't imagine that a writer or artist could be a fool), apart, I say, from their minds, most of them had great and magnanimous hearts."

"And have you never occupied yourself with literature, never written yourself, Count?" asked Kalinovich modestly.

"Me!" cried the Count. "What sort of a writer should I be? I have other things to do, besides I can't write."

"That is hard to believe," rejoined Kalinovich politely.

"Indeed I cannot," continued the Count, "though I have lived almost all my life among writers and am bound to say that I have had many dear and valued friends among them," he added, with a sigh.

The conversation flagged for a few moments.

"I presume you knew Pushkin, Your Excellency," suggested Kalinovich.

"Knew him very well. We practically grew up together, we made our *début* as young men in society together. I was an ensign of the Guards, and he, I think, was at that time in the Foreign Office, *c'était un homme de génie* in the full sense of the word. Pushkin, Baratinsky, Delvig, Pavel Nashchokin (he and I were in the same regiment) and myself were all young men of the same circle."

"I can't remember," put in Paulina, narrowing her eyes, "where it was I read that Pushkin preferred to be regarded in society as a man of the world rather than as a writer and a poet."

"Well, now, Cousin," replied the Count. "He did and then again he didn't. At the very beginning, in his youth, perhaps he did. I met him in Moldavia and Odessa, as well as in Petersburg, and moreover I knew that lady he was in love with—as charming a woman as ever was born. At that time perhaps he did pose as a fop, as was then the fashion among us young people. . . . But afterwards, when he won universal fame, not to mention the attention of His Majesty the Emperor and the rank of *Kammerjunker*, he began to understand the value of his talent better."

"I think Pushkin had other criteria for his talent," remarked Kalinovich.

"Undoubtedly," agreed the Count, "but the best thing of all in him," he continued, smiting his knee, "was his love of Russia! He seemed to take an interest in the most trifling details. And whenever I went to see him in Petersburg, during the last few years of his life, you know, he almost always said to me: 'You've lived so long in the provinces, you've wandered about so much, Count, tell me something about things there, and what is going on.' And as a matter of fact, just before one of my visits to Petersburg, there was the most appalling incident in our gubernia. A fellow called Solfini turned up—an Italian, a Greek, a Jew, or something of the sort—anyhow, an artist. At that time I used to spend the winter in our little town and, since I love art, I was kind to him. It appeared that he painted portraits to a marvel—correct drawing, effective lighting, the characteristic features seized with inimitable skill, but no polish, no finish, especially as to details of dress, et cetera—none whatever! That would have been nothing in itself, but when he began to paint you he became a regular tyrant—the sittings lasted up to seven hours, and woe betide you if you decided to get up and go! He would fling down his brush and rush away, refusing to proceed with the portrait for any money. This is precisely how he behaved with the Governor's lady. I told him that such impatience, especially in regard to such a lady, was highly unsuitable, but he answered me with a naïve saying in his own tongue: 'I'm an artist, and not a house-painter, by God! She's a fool. I can't paint her.' And that's all!"

Paulina laughed. Kalinovich smiled too.

"Why, how well you imitate that Solfini, Count!" said Paulina. "I seem to see him."

"Yes, I'm not a bad imitator," he replied, and turned to Kalinovich again. "To crown all, this gentleman fell in love with a charming woman, the wife of a most estimable person, a bit of a flirt. She may have led him on, and no wonder, he was really a very handsome fellow, tall, distinguished, thick black hair, a Roman nose, a rose-leaf flush on each cheek. And yet between him and some wife of a councillor of state there is a great gulf fixed, you know. But of course this Solfini, in his capacity of free citizen, would not admit anything of the sort. . . ."

"I can imagine the state he was in," interrupted Paulina smilingly.

"Terrific!" continued the Count. "He began following this poor woman everywhere, till at last her husband gave orders for him not to be received in his house. Then he raised a regular scandal—called out the husband. The latter of course refused. The painter went about the town armed with a dagger, intending to kill him, so that the husband was forced to complain to the Governor. And our unfortunate Romeo, without a kopek, with nothing but a thin overcoat on in thirty degrees of frost, was sent out of the town by the police. . . ."

"Poor fellow!" said Paulina.

"Wait till you hear how it ended!" said the Count. "It began by Solfini escaping at the first posting-station. Some time elapsed, and not a word was heard of him. The lady's husband went to the country, she remaining alone. . . . And then various versions were given—some say Solfini appeared in the town all of a sudden, bribed her servants, and got into the house. Others, that he sent her several letters begging for a rendezvous, and she at last agreed."

"She very likely did. Pity alone might make one," said Paulina aside to Kalinovich.

"Very likely," he agreed.

"Undoubtedly," said the Count, and resumed his narrative: "However this may have been, he got into her bedroom and locked the door . . . and nobody knows what sort of scene took place between them. But suddenly a cry was heard and then a shot. The servants ran up, broke the lock and found two corpses in each other's arms. Solfini had a pistol in each hand—one directed at the lady's breast, the other held at his own mouth, so that a bullet went through his skull."

"Oh, Count, how tragic, how pathetic!" exclaimed Paulina, closing her eyes.

The Count replied with a shrug of the shoulders.

"And despite these eccentricities," he resumed, "and his passionate nature, which led him into crime, Solfini was the kindest and noblest of men. Take this trait for instance: he was very fond of attending the episcopal service at our church, said it reminded him of Rome and the Pope. There was the usual crowd of beggars in the porch. 'Ah, poor fellows!' he would exclaim. 'You have nothing to eat!' And he always gave them all the money he had had on him."

"An artist!" sighed Paulina.

"An artist in the true sense of the word," repeated the Count and seemed to fall into meditation. "All this," he resumed after a few moments, "I told Pushkin. He heard me out and a few days later, when we met again, he said: 'I'm going to describe your Italian, Count. Come and see me tomorrow, I'll read it to you.' I went. . . . He began reading me his famous *Improviser*. 'Well, how d'you like it?' he asked. 'Marvellous!' I said. 'But what has it to do with my foolish story?' 'A great deal,' said he. 'Your story gave me the idea of describing an artistic nature, an improviser, amidst our cold-hearted, selfish society'—and so my Solfini was immortalized."

Paulina had listened to the Count's long narrative with great interest, and Kalinovich too had followed it at-

tentively; the General's widow alone paid it no heed. The voice of her aged stomach was for her all-powerful.

"Will dinner soon be ready?" she asked her daughter.

"Very soon, *Maman*," replied the latter.

Kalinovich, seeing that it was time to go, rose.

"*Au revoir, au revoir!*" cried the Count.

But Paulina suddenly interposed "Perhaps Monsieur Kalinovich would be so kind as to dine with us?"

A transitory, almost imperceptible smile again flitted over the Count's face.

"Splendid!" he said. "That will give us a few more hours in which to continue our pleasant conversation."

Kalinovich bowed.

"Splendid!" repeated the Count. "Put down your hat and take a seat."

Kalinovich obeyed, and once again quite an animated conversation began, chiefly, of course, on the part of the Count, and mostly about literature. He praised the tendency of modern authors, a tendency which he called wise and practical, and in which, thank God, there was no trace of the sugary sentimentality of the twenties. He rejoiced in the final annihilation of odes, stilted dramas, which, by their high-flown falsity, could only rouse the spleen of all sensible men. He rejoiced, finally, that modern poets had ceased inditing verses "To Her," "To the Moon," "To the Stars." He praised the superficial brilliance of French literature, spoke with respect of English literature, in a word, showed himself to be a complete amateur of literature, and, as was to be suspected, had invented the whole story of Solfini, by way of showing the young author his sympathy for artists and love for the arts, and at the same time hinting at his acquaintance with Pushkin, the great poet and society man. Pushkin, whose friendship, as is well known, has been claimed since his death not only by persons completely unacquainted with him, but even by his literary

enemies, thanks to the innocent weakness which makes every little mortal desire to get closer to a great man, and exhibit himself in the light shed by a single ray of his glory. Kalinovich was clever enough to have understood this, but he noticed nothing whatever. How could he? The Count approached his heart by such devious ways, flattered him so subtly! And incense burnt to one's own ego, however crudely it may be done, is enough to turn anyone's head. There are many people in this world whose hearts are not to be touched by entreaties or tears, or the claims of justice—but flatter them, and they melt at once and are ready to do anything for you. And my hero, it must be admitted, belonged to this category.

At half past four Paulina, the Count and Kalinovich sat round the table. The old lady dined in her own room. A flock of liveried footmen waited at table. The food was served in silver dishes and eaten from silver plates. The dinner was splendid, such a dinner as is only to be found in a provincial town. After the death of the General, who had been for eleven years a colonel in the horse guards, Madame Shevalova still retained a most refined chef, who, alas, since the death of his master had languished in inaction, practising his skill on the creation of potato soup and fried liver, and only having scope for his talent when the Count came. Then he was given as many and as good provisions as he liked, and the old man had a chance to show himself. The Count never neglected an opportunity of saying a kind word to him if he happened to come across him after dinner.

"Divine, exquisite!" he would say, kissing his fingertips, "you are a true genius, Grigory Vasilich!"

At these words Grigory Vasilich would cast a gloomy look at him.

"It's no good if I *am* a genius, Your Excellency, I'm nothing but a plain cook nowadays, I do nothing but boil

porridge," he would reply, and the Count usually became evasive, fearing he would hear still harsher words about his employers from the old man.

After dinner Paulina invited her guests to sit in her elegantly furnished boudoir for coffee and a smoke. Mademoiselle Paulina had long desired a cosy room with a fire-place, velvet draperies and chinoiserie. She had tried to coax her mother, but that old woman had spent all she intended to on the furnishing of the apartment and would not hear of it. Paulina, as in all her difficulties, told the Count all about it.

"We'll see to that," he said, and that very evening raised the question of a boudoir:

"No, Count, no, no! It would be an extravagance!"

"An extravagance, *ma tante*? But my cousin has nowhere to sit."

"An extravagance," repeated the old woman stubbornly.

"In that case I will furnish a room for my cousin at my own expense," the Count told her.

"I know you're always ready to throw away money," said the General's widow, smiling.

To tell the truth she had thought the Count was joking. But not a bit of it—the sitting-room was ready in a fortnight! Paulina felt terribly ashamed. The old woman, too, was astonished.

"Why, Count, is this a gift to us?" she asked.

"A gift, *ma tante*, a gift, but to my cousin, not to you. We won't even let you go into the room," he replied.

"How reckless you are!" said the General's widow, shaking her head, but obviously pleased (she liked gifts under any form whatsoever).

"*Merci, cousin*," said Paulina, profoundly moved, offering the Count a hand who pressed it with a significant expression on his face.

When they had settled themselves comfortably in the

low cushioned arm-chairs, the Count once again turned the conversation to literature, lightly touching on his astonishment at never meeting the best modern authors in Petersburg society of late. Where they lived and whom they met, God alone knew, and yet, in his opinion, it was most essential that writers should be in touch with good society.

"You, Messieurs literary men," he went on, addressing himself to Kalinovich, "if you lived in good society you would come across characters and subjects interesting and familiar to cultured people, while society, for its part, would begin to love what is its own, what is Russian, part of itself."

To this Kalinovich rejoined that it was not so easy to get into high society.

"On the contrary," the Count assured him, "you only have to try. At first, of course, your vanity may be slightly wounded, but they would soon get to know you, get used to you, become fond of you. . . . We have seen plenty of cases of persons in no way distinguished, of God knows what rank and even profession, who frequent the best society, and believe me, a Russian author will always find a respectable place for himself there. But those obscure friends of yours, gentlemen, that everlasting haunting of your own circles, is bound to have a bad influence on your work. You know the saying: 'Tell me who are your friends, and I will tell you who you are.'"

Kalinovich appeared to be in full agreement with the Count and it was after ten when he rose to take his leave.

"I hope you will come and see us sometimes," said Paulina.

Kalinovich replied that he desired nothing better.

"As for me," put in the Count, "I have a suggestion to make in this respect. My family will be here the day

after tomorrow, and then we will get up a little literary soiree and ask Mr. Kalinovich to read us his novel."

"That would be very nice!" said Paulina. "I did not like to trouble you, but I would simply love to hear an author read his own works. It is a pleasure given to so few. . . ."

Replying that to hear was to obey, and that he was always ready to oblige, Kalinovich made his last bows and departed.

"Well, how do you like that young man?" asked the Count when he had gone. -

"He's very nice," replied Paulina.

"Nice, is he?" teased the Count.

"Yes, nice," repeated Paulina, looking at him significantly.

"Oh, woman, woman!" exclaimed the Count.

"Stop that! You ought to know me by now," said Paulina, playfully closing his lips with her hand, which he kissed, and they both repaired to the General's widow.

As for Kalinovich he returned home under the impression of sensations new to him. The most important of these was the comfort of the Shevalova apartment, and, oh, heavens! how greatly it exceeded the shabbiness prevailing in the Godnev way of life, amidst which he had lived for over a year, without seeing anything better. It must be admitted that the idea of comfort, of prosperity, had acquired immense importance in the mind of my hero. For that matter, is this not true of any of the respectable, rational young men of our time? The author has come to the unshakeable conclusion that glory, love, universal ideas, immortality are all nothing to the children of this age, compared with prosperity. Everything else is but a chance thing in our souls, prosperity alone stands in our path with its irresistible power of attraction. This it is to which we direct all our efforts. This it is which is our sole idol, to which we sacrifice all

that is dearest, even if it entails tearing all that is best out of our heart, severing its main artery, and, still bleeding, getting as close as we can to the pedestal of our golden calf. A whole life is spent in toil, ending in consumption, for the sake of prosperity. For the sake of prosperity men cringe, bow down, violate their consciences for decades. For the sake of prosperity they leave their families, their native land, go round the world, drown, die of starvation in the desert. For the sake of prosperity an inheritance is sought for by hook or by crook. For the sake of prosperity bribes are taken, nay, crimes are committed.

III

Pyotr Mikhailich awaited Kalinovich the next day with the greatest impatience, but the latter, apparently in no hurry, did not come till the evening.

"Well, Sir!" exclaimed the old man. "Where did you spend the day yesterday, and what sort of a time did you have? Did you go to see His Excellency? What did you talk about?"

"Oh, nothing special. I did go and we did talk," replied Kalinovich tersely, but observing that Nastenka, who had scarcely acknowledged his bow, seemed to be in the sulks, he began, on purpose to vex her, to praise the Count, saying that he was very glad to have made his acquaintance, for it was a pleasure to meet such a man in the provinces.

"Yes, yes, the embodiment of mind and enlightenment!" agreed Pyotr Mikhailich.

Nastenka listened in silence and then burst out with:

"You must have had a very good time at your new friends'—you dined there and stayed there almost all day."

It was the Captain, who apparently watched over

every step taken by the young inspector, who had told her this.

"Yes, I did dine there," replied Kalinovich, in a tone of calm indifference.

"I didn't know that!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich. "What was the dinner like? Tell us about it! Quite *à la* General, I suppose. They say everything is served on silver."

"The dinner was excellent," replied Kalinovich.

"I can well imagine that," said Nastenka scornfully.

Kalinovich's words had been too much for her patience. "What!" she thought, "this proud, this great man" (she never doubted that Kalinovich was a great man), "this proud man is vain enough to go into ecstasies over an invitation to the home of a stupid, pompous General's widow!" and she made up her mind to treat him with indifference and scorn, and might perhaps have done so if Kalinovich had shown the slightest regret or sense of guilt. But instead of this he sulked even more than she, and said not a word to her, cast not a single glance of understanding at her the whole evening, assuming the coldly courteous tone which she so disliked in him and dreaded most of all. In such struggles, of course, it is always the one who is more soft-hearted, who loves the most, that gives in first. Later on in the evening, after supper, Nastenka, unable to contain herself any longer, said:

"It's all your fault, and yet you're cross with me!"

"I always pay back caprice in kind," he said, and took his departure.

When Nastenka found herself alone she melted into bitter tears. "Dear Lord, what a man!" she cried. This sort of thing was more than she could either endure or understand.

On the day appointed for the reading, the Count's wife and daughter came to town in time for dinner. Paulina was delighted to see them, while the Count did not fail

to remark that a little surprise awaited them, and that a very clever, cultivated young man was going to read his novel to them that evening.

"I trust you will show him every attention," he concluded, with a smile that it is to be assumed was understood by his wife and daughter.

"Why, how nice that will be!" said the Countess in her soft, gentle voice. She was still beautiful, though for the last five years or so she had suffered from her nerves, so that the slightest noise made her head ache, and the Count guarded her from it with unfailing attention. Their daughter smiled angelically at her father. It may as well be said that despite his delicacy, which was carried to such a point that no member of his family had ever seen him in his dressing-gown, the Count nevertheless had established his authority so firmly that his every word, his every glance was law.

It had been rather more difficult to announce the literary soiree to the General's widow, and took the Count at least half an hour to explain matters to her. At last the old lady seemed to understand, not very clearly, it is true, and pronounced her usual phrase:

"I'm very glad, Count, please make yourself at home. . . . You know how fond of you I am!"

For answer the Count kissed her hand. Seeing her glance at the bag of sweets he handed it to her and left the room. He had been visited by a new idea. He had learned, through rumours in the town, of the relations between Kalinovich and Nastenka, and desired to see with his own eyes to what extent these rumours were true. After close inspection during Kalinovich's last visit, he did not know whether to believe them or not.

The Count had given Paulina to understand all this by a series of subtle hints, adding that it would not be a bad idea to invite the Godnevs to the party.

Paulina thoroughly understood him, and immediately

wrote a note to Pyotr Mikhailich, most politely inviting him and his charming daughter to their party, and explaining that their mutual acquaintance Monsieur Kalinovich had promised to read them his excellent novel, and that she felt sure they would not refuse to share the pleasure of listening to it.

"*Maman* joins me in asking this of you, and we are deeply grieved at your having quite forgotten us for such a long time," she added, on the Count's advice, in a postscript.

The receipt of this delicately worded letter astonished Pyotr Mikhailich and still more rejoiced him for Kalinovich's sake. "Look how high our Yakov Vasilich has soared!" he thought, and, fearing nothing so much as Nastenka refusing to go to Madame Shevalova's, he entered the drawing-room timidly and told his daughter of the invitation in faltering tones. Nastenka at first flew into a rage.

"Aha, Kalinovich, so that's your little game! Very good!" she thought to herself. "You are invited to read, and not a word to us!"

"Well, shall we go or not?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich, looking into her face impatiently.

"You can do as you like, I shan't go," replied Nastenka.

"Come, dearie," began the old man, but suddenly Nastenka's face cleared.

"They invite us to this party—and why?" she asked herself. "Probably because he himself demanded it, but did not like to tell us. Oh, what a darling you are!" she thought in conclusion.

"I was only joking, Papa," she said aloud. "I'll go. I should like to be at this party myself."

The old man kissed the top of her head.

"That's for being a good girl," he said, rubbing the palms of his hands in his delight, and added in tones of childish elation:

"Well, what about sending for Kalinovich? We'll all go together."

"Do, Papa, but not from me," replied Nastenka.

She did not want to give way all at once. Grater was dispatched, but returned with the news that Kalinovich was not at home.

"Where can he be?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"How do I know?" answered the invalid angrily, and started clambering back to the stove-ledge. But as it was already six o'clock, Pyotr Mikhailich gave him strict orders to harness the horse immediately, and began scolding the old boor for his disobedience to Kalinovich, which had been reported to him by the latter. But Grater would not listen and only went out banging the door as usual.

"What an antediluvian animal!" said Pyotr Mikhailich and went off to shave himself. Nastenka too betook herself to her toilet. Never before had she taken so much pains to dress becomingly. Every little trick was employed for this purpose. Her black silk dress was brightened up with bows of crimson ribbons, her hair was arranged in ringlets at the front of her pretty head, and her ears were adorned with the sweetest little coral earrings. In a word she wished to show herself in the proud and pompous home of the General's widow as worthy of Kalinovich's love, feeling sure they knew all about it. In the meantime Pyotr Mikhailich was quite ready and beginning to lose patience.

"We'll be late, we're sure to be late and show discourtesy to our hosts all because of that Nastasia Petrovna. And that boor of an old soldier!" he said, and begged the Captain, who had just arrived, to go and hurry that swine Grater. The Captain, of course, immediately fulfilled his brother's wish and went out to the shed, where he found Grater dawdling about, and began to help him, tightening the girths and fixing the

reins. By about eight o'clock everything was ready. The father and daughter set out. It appeared, however, that it was very inconvenient for two persons to sit in the carriage we already know so well. It was all Nastenka could do to squeeze in between her father and the stubborn Grater. To crown all, the roads were appallingly muddy, and the rain was coming down in a soaking drizzle, and Grater, angry at having been made to bestir himself all day, did as he liked, heedless of the shouting and swearing of Pyotr Mikhailich, and drove them at a footpace. Words fail to describe the havoc caused to Nastenka's attire. Her dress was crushed, her white satin hat soaked, her hair out of curl and falling in ugly elf-locks. She resolved, however, to maintain her presence of mind and behave with the utmost composure.

When they arrived Kalinovich had not yet put in an appearance, but the small company of his listeners was already assembled in the drawing-room set apart for the purpose. The old lady was established at one end of the sofa, and at the other reclined the Countess, who was fatigued by her journey. The Count smoked his cigarette thoughtfully, apparently deep in thought. Paulina was narrowing her eyes as she inspected an embroidery pattern in the latest fashion book. The Count's daughter leaned back in her arm-chair in a delightful pose. With her pretty head a little on one side and her winning smile, she was exquisite. The Godnevs were announced. The Count exchanged glances with Paulina, and both rose to meet the guests. Pyotr Mikhailich bowed and scraped to the Count with an old-fashioned ceremony. He kissed the hands of Madame Shevalova and Paulina, and bowed respectfully to the other ladies present, his two hands dangling a little in front of him. As for Nastenka—good heavens! Much as I love my heroine, much as I admire her mind, her excellent heart, charming as I consider her, I cannot conceal the fact that she

was almost ridiculous in these moments. Anxious to show no embarrassment, and to appear at ease, she offered her hand negligently to Paulina, made the briefest of curtsies to the Count, nodded to the old lady, and barely glanced at the Countess and her daughter. The observant Count hastened to offer her a chair. The young Countess, beside whom Pyotr Mikhailich seated himself, involuntarily retreated an inch or two away, unpleasantly struck by the old man's rough hands in which he held his old-fashioned, rain-soaked hat. Paulina tried to entertain Nastenka, but the latter replied to her advances superciliously, though with an evident effort to master her feelings.

"Our author is not here yet," said the Count, glancing at Nastenka.

She flushed, without knowing that she did.

"I venture to inform Your Excellency," replied Pyotr Mikhailich, "that we sent for Mr. Kalinovich before leaving, but he was out, and we presumed he was here already."

"Not yet, not yet! He'll be here soon, he's sure to come," repeated the Count over and over again, this time turning frankly to Nastenka.

Again she blushed.

At half past nine Kalinovich arrived. Anticipating a messenger from the Godnevs he had given orders to say he was out, whereas in reality he had been at home all day, tasting in advance the subtle delights which were to tickle his vanity as an author that evening. The Shevalova mansion, that proud citadel, had opened to receive his talent, and people actually accounted it an honour to hear him read his work. At last he would read in the presence of the Countess and her daughter, of whose feminine charms he had heard so much, and whom, perhaps, he might interest both as an author and a man. These ideas and expectations almost threw my

hero into a fever. But much as he desired to set off without delay, though it was only just after six, he suppressed the inclination and, dressing at his leisure, left his house a little after nine, to show that, while ready to give pleasure to the company, he was in no hurry, since he himself found no particular enjoyment in it—in a word he wished to keep up appearances. He ascended the staircase and stepped across the drawing-room with the quietly independent gait often affected by young men on entering a house in which they are accustomed to be regarded as almost divine beings. But catching sight in the mirror of Pyotr Mikhailich's clumsy figure and Nastenka with her hair out of curl, he involuntarily retreated a step.

"How did *they* get here?" he wondered, suspecting this to be one of Nastenka's manoeuvres, and registering a vow to be even with her afterwards. But since there was nothing to be done about it now, he assumed as unruffled an air as possible and entered the drawing-room; he bowed respectfully to the hostess, Paulina and the Count, shook hands with a forced smile with Nastenka, who trembled noticeably, and finally, with the same smile, took the waiting hand of Pyotr Mikhailich and turned away, feeling renewed embarrassment.

The Count's daughter made an instant impression on him.

"Good Lord, how pretty she is!" he thought and, moved by an involuntary feeling of shyness, sat down at some distance from her. The Count, however, not wishing to waste any more time, asked him to begin reading immediately, and led him to a seat next to his daughter. Kalinovich could feel the touch of her heavy silk robe against his leg; he could see the tip of her graceful slipper, and at the same moment caught sight of the toe of Nastenka's suède boot, protruding from beneath her skirt. A breath of fragrance from the young girl, com-

posed, be it said, of expensive pomades and perfumes, completed the enchantment. Nastenka just then directed a tender and passionate glance at him, one of those glances which in a moment of love spell bliss, but at the present moment was absolutely indecent. Kalinovich was hardly in a state to control himself and endure this glance. It seemed to him that the Count had noticed it, that the Countess was regarding Nastenka with kindly pity, and that it was precisely this that had evoked their daughter's angelic smile. Such was the secret, seamy side of the proceedings. Outwardly everything was perfectly correct. The author read in a firm voice, the listeners were suitably attentive—all but the hostess, who yawned unashamedly and looked from one to another, as if asking what was going on, and would it ever come to an end. Pyotr Mikhailich of course displayed his satisfaction more frankly and sincerely than anyone else, and even once or twice made as if to clap softly, the Count nodding to him in token of agreement each time, while the dimples on his daughter's cheeks deepened—Pyotr Mikhailich with his odd appearance and his clapping amused her greatly.

"Well done, well done!" exclaimed the Count when Kalinovich had finished.

"*C'est joli, c'est joli,*" said Paulina. "*N'est-ce pas, comtesse?*" she continued, addressing the Countess.

"*Oui,*" replied the latter in her low, gentle voice.

But Nastenka, my poor Nastenka, seemed to have determined to make herself ridiculous that evening. She turned suddenly to the Count and began discussing Kalinovich's novel with him, using the fashionable critical jargon, mentioning objectivity, and not forgetting to put in a word for psychological analysis. The Count answered her with the utmost courtesy and attention, and Paulina looked at her with curiosity. Kalinovich could feel a cold sweat starting out in great drops on his brow.

He could have killed Nastenka at that moment, and Pyotr Mikhailich too, who was listening to the absurd pronouncements of his daughter with the utmost satisfaction. The Count, however, quickly changed the subject, telling Paulina that as the hostess she ought to reward the kind author for his excellent reading and play something.

"My cousin is quite a musician," he added, turning to Kalinovich.

"That would indeed be a real reward, I haven't heard a single note of music for over a year," replied the latter, delighted at the turn of events.

"In that case—with pleasure! But please do not imagine that I am a musician, as the Count calls it," replied Paulina, getting up. "And will dear Catherine sing something to us afterwards?" she added, turning to the young girl.

"I think not," rejoined the Count with a swift but significant glance at his daughter. "Mademoiselle Catherine has not been in voice for the past fortnight, and we would therefore not advise her to sing."

"Oh, I won't sing," said his daughter, with a delicious lisp, and rose too, straightening her slender figure. These were the first words she had uttered in the presence of Kalinovich.

"What a divine creature!" he thought, glancing at her, and they all trooped into the ball-room, with the exception of the hostess and the Countess. Paulina sat down at the grand piano and the younger girl leaned lightly over the back of her chair, turning over the leaves with her classically moulded white hand. Paulina played quite a difficult aria, and played with understanding and feeling. But Kalinovich neither heard nor saw anything but the young girl. His meditations were, however, unpleasantly interrupted when he happened to look towards one of the windows where he caught sight of

Nastenka seated there and directing at him a gaze as tender and passionate as ever. When their eyes met she motioned to him with her eyes to come and sit beside her. Kalinovich gave her such a look in reply that the poor girl at last understood all, and felt as if by instinct that he hated her at that moment. Her heart sank. Hardly conscious of her actions she went straight up to her father when Paulina stopped playing, and said:

"Let's go home, Papa! It's late!"

Pyotr Mikhailich agreed and began taking a formal leave. Paulina begged them to stay to supper.

"No, we can't stay," replied Nastenka and went away without taking leave of the hostess, and without so much as a glance at Kalinovich. Pyotr Mikhailich followed her.

A weight seemed to fall from Kalinovich's shoulders when they had gone, and when Paulina and the Count's daughter began walking up and down the room arm in arm, he joined them. Just then, to the indescribable horror of both ladies, a mouse suddenly scampered across the floor, and this led to a conversation about ghosts, forebodings and clairvoyants. Kalinovich related several curious incidents in this connection, arousing the liveliest interest in his two listeners. Paulina obviously weighed in her mind everything he said, and the smiles of the younger girl became less supercilious and more indulgent. When he told them of the ghost seen by the King of Sweden as an incontrovertible historical fact, she was so much interested that she went and told her mother about it. The Countess too wished to hear this story, which, she said, seemed vaguely familiar to her. Kalinovich repeated it in still more detail and with great feeling, and the ladies were appropriately horrified.

"Incredible!" they cried with one voice.

My hero, who, as we have seen, was usually taciturn and somewhat austere at the Godnevs', now showed himself to be an extremely clever, courteous and delightful

young man, capable of entertaining the company most agreeably.

When he took his leave, the Count, pressing his hand fervently, repeated again and again:

"We are very grateful to you, you have been most entertaining. I feel sure Mademoiselle Paulina will ask you to call again. You must not forget them."

"Oh yes, Mr. Kalinovich, you will be doing us a great favour!" repeated Paulina in almost imploring tones.

Kalinovich bowed as if to show his readiness to fulfil any commands, and departed, this time carrying with him still more favourable impressions of the Shevalova mansion—he was haunted the whole way home not only by the comfort in that house, but also by the exquisite, fragrant image of the Count's young daughter. He liked the Countess, too, with her faded but still charming face and the elegant simplicity of her movements. But when he got home all these dreams were scattered to the winds—for there he found a letter from Nastenka and, anticipating reproaches, opened it with hasty annoyance. The confusion of ideas, the careless handwriting, still more the tears which had mingled with the ink before it dried, showed with what feelings the poor girl had written these lines.

"At last I understand you, Kalinovich," she wrote. "You showed yourself in a true light in front of those people. They insulted me deeply once, and I wept. But those tears were a mere shadow of the anguish my heart is now undergoing. Their contempt I bore easily, because I despised them, but you, the only person I have ever loved, you of whose love I was so proud—you were ashamed of my love! You can't trifle with human beings like that, Kalinovich! There *is* a God—He will avenge me! I do not write in order to extort love from you. I am proud, and know that, having suffered so much yourself, the sufferings of others arouse no sympathy in you. Fare-

well! Tomorrow I shall beg one favour of my Father—to let me go into a convent, where I can die to the world. I wish you happiness with your grand friends. God is too good to reject me, poor sinner, rejected by you. In Him alone is all my hope now. Farewell!"

"That half-crazed girl may cause a scandal," said Kalinovich to himself, throwing down the letter, and the next morning, at about seven o'clock, without even waiting to drink tea, he went to the Godnevs. Pyotr Mikhailich had gone to the market as usual. Nastenka had only just got up and was still in her bedroom. Kalinovich went straight to her, a thing he had never done before. What they said to one another is not known, but Nastenka went into the drawing-room to pour out tea with a fairly tranquil expression on her face, though her eyes were red with weeping. Kalinovich, grave and gloomy, took his usual seat.

"How could I help it if that's what I thought?" she began, obviously continuing their former conversation.

Kalinovich shrugged his shoulders.

"I certainly was annoyed," he replied, "to see you come to this house, to people with whom you have nothing in common, either in breeding or tone. I wonder you didn't understand why they invited you, and that they treated you as my mistress. . . . How could you, a clever, sensitive girl, fail to recognize the insult—how could you?"

"Well, supposing they do take me for that—I have nothing to be ashamed of."

"Shame and social conventions are two different things," said Kalinovich. "Love is a most honourable and noble passion, but if I were to go about showing my passion in my eyes . . . say what you will, it's ridiculous, disgusting!"

Nastenka's eyes again filled with tears.

"Do you suppose I did it on purpose?" she asked.

"Not on purpose, but under the influence of your intolerable jealousy, from which there is no escape for me."

"No, no, Jacques! I am not jealous. It's not jealousy, it's love."

"Love!" exclaimed Kalinovich. "Love gives you no right to bind a man hand and foot! I make the acquaintance of the Count—you make a scene. I have the misfortune, again contrary to your wish, to dine at the Shevalovs'—another scene! Finally—a literary soiree is arranged—and you, without the slightest tact, go there and behave with the utmost impropriety. For my own purposes I may cultivate the acquaintance of twenty such counts and generals' widows, I may choose to pay court to that misshapen Paulina and still remain for you what I was before. You ought to understand that you and I are only too firmly bound together now. I answer for you with my conscience and my honour, in which I have so far given you no right to disbelieve."

These last words calmed Nastenka completely.

"Well, forgive me! I'm sorry!" she said, taking his hand.

"I am not blaming you, I only beg you not to be always standing in my light. As it is, I have enough difficulty in making the slightest headway."

"I won't do it again," promised Nastenka, kissing his hand.

Almost all their disagreements ended in Nastenka changing from the role of accuser to that of accused.

IV

In the space of a month Kalinovich became almost one of the family at the Shevalovs'. At least two or three times a week Paulina found some pretext for inviting him either to dinner or to spend the evening—and he accepted these invitations. Nastenka no longer protested and even smiled at Paulina's efforts.

"Mademoiselle Paulina is obviously in love with you," she said in the presence of her father and uncle.

"Yes, I have noticed that," answered Kalinovich.

"Supposing you were to marry her!" continued Nastenka with a sly smile.

"Why, that would be splendid!" responded Kalinovich. "But only on condition that she made a will in my favour and died immediately after the wedding."

"And wouldn't you be sorry for her?" asked Nastenka in accents of affected reproach.

"Certainly I would, but I would be happy for myself," replied Kalinovich.

Sometimes, carried away by the jest, he would actually add: "Why shouldn't Mademoiselle Paulina take it into her head to present me with that ring she keeps in a cupboard in her room, as a token of her love? It's a solitaire as big as a pea. For such a ring one would remember a woman all one's life, even if she hadn't a rib to bless herself with."

Pyotr Mikhailich shook his head as usual. But this sort of talk seemed to suit the Captain more than any of them. It should be noted that, though he spoke thus of Paulina at the Godnevs', Kalinovich was extremely polite and attentive when he was with her, and she might easily have considered that he felt an interest in her. My hero, by the way, used this circumstance as a cover for his secret and quite unsuspected dreams of the Count's charming daughter, whom he felt a consuming desire to see. Several times he determined to call on the Count at his country estate, though he had not been invited, and perhaps might have done so if circumstances had not worked in his favour. The General's widow suddenly reminded the Count of his promise to see to a water-cure for her, and reflecting that this would be very cheap, she decided to move to her country estate. At first Paulina was most reluctant to go, but she knew it would

be useless to try and dissuade her mother. Fortunately the Count arrived that very day and she told him in great distress of the old lady's whim.

"Why, that would be still better!" he said.

"Better? You know what it is that keeps me here!" said Paulina.

"Yes," said the Count, and added after a moment's thought: "Well, then ... you could invite him to the country. We should at least be removing him in this way from the influence of the local gentry."

"Oh, that would be impossible! With her stinginess she would regard it as the most appalling extravagance. As it is she's always asking why he dines here so often."

"True," said the Count, and then, after a moment's thought, added: "Never mind, we'll manage it. . . ."

Paulina glanced at him questioningly.

That same evening Kalinovich called. The Count received him very kindly and, while talking of this and that, suddenly said:

"Look here, Yakov Vasilich, you are free just now, it's a warm summer, and it's so stuffy and dusty in town! Why not make us a present of a month, and be my guest in the country? It would give us great pleasure, and would perhaps be some slight distraction for yourself. My house is very well situated, there's a little garden, a kind of a stream, and, by the way, Mademoiselle Paulina and her mother will be our neighbours. . . ."

Kalinovich flushed with pleasure. To live a whole month near that delightful girl, to see her every day—this was beyond all expectation!

"Are you moving to the country too?" he asked, forcing himself with difficulty to address Paulina.

"Yes, we are leaving this house," she replied, blushing too. She interpreted Kalinovich's embarrassment in her own favour.

"So that's settled, Yakov Vasilich!" said the Count.

"I shall consider it a great pleasure," replied Kalinovich.

"Splendid, splendid!" repeated the Count over and over again.

A sense of the happiness in store for him so overpowered my hero that he was unable to sit out the evening, and soon rose to take his leave. He walked along the board pavement with rapid steps, whistling a march tune in unusually high spirits, and when Rumyantsev chanced to cross his path he greeted him so cordially that the teacher was overwhelmed with delight and astonishment.

Kalinovich went straight to the Godnevs, who were at supper, and though he tried to look as if he were calm and indifferent, his face was radiant.

Pyotr Mikhailich met him with his usual cry of: "Good evening!"

"Good evening and good-bye!" replied Kalinovich.

Nastenka, the Captain, and Pelageya Evgrafovna, who was making a salad, looked up at him.

"Why good-bye?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I've just had an invitation to spend all the holidays at the Count's," explained Kalinovich, sitting down beside Nastenka.

"All the holidays—why, such a long time!" she exclaimed, turning a little pale.

"I need to recuperate a little, especially since I have got to write. And that's impossible here."

"I thought one could write anywhere," remarked Nastenka.

"Not at all. You know very well I can't write here," rejoined Kalinovich emphatically.

For the time no more was said on the subject.

By the end of the week the General's widow had completed her removal to the country, and two days later the Count's carriage was sent for Kalinovich. On the evening before his departure, Nastenka, finding

herself alone with him, started to cry, and Kalinovich flew into a rage.

"What do you want of me? Can it be you would like me to stay beside you my whole life, without stirring from your—excuse me—petticoats?" he broke out.

"I neither wish nor demand this. I only claim the right to weep and grieve," replied Nastenka.

"No, that's not the right you want, you claim for yourself a very strange right," said Kalinovich, "the right to poison my slightest pleasures."

"I can't help it if that's how you understand me," said Nastenka, and uttered not another word. She herself considered that she had no right to cry. Kalinovich had trained her to regard the slightest opposition to any desire of his as tyranny on her part. In order to avoid an unpleasant farewell scene, with a possible repetition of tears, he left at daybreak the next morning. The first part of the journey was smooth and uneventful. The four lively horses galloped briskly and merrily, and the light elegant phaeton scarcely swayed. The morning air was damp and chilly. The sun poured its rosy light on all around. In a field near by a peasant was urging on his small heavy-headed horse with loud cries. On the other side of the road a herd of cows moved in a lazy line. The phaeton passed through a hamlet where a pretty country lass stood yawning on the steps of a dilapidated porch. The bleating of sheep could be heard. Bells were tolling for morning service—in the town probably. The ripening rye swayed in dazzling undulations and the spring corn was bright green. A mushroom could be seen in a small thicket next to the road, and a few wild strawberries gleamed red on the site of a forest fire. When he came to a steep stony slope, the coachman put on the brakes, and the wheelers, almost crouching on their haunches, carefully drew the carriage after them. All four horses then docilely crossed a mill-dam, trembling and

pricking their ears at the confused sound of the sails and the water, and then began the forests, which became denser and denser, so that in some parts the light hardly penetrated through the branches....

The road lay over the roots of trees and across stagnant green pools. But every now and then the scent of lilies-of-the-valley came from the thickets, and somewhere quite near nightingales trilled, other birds chirped to one another, or a woodcock fluttered loudly from beneath a bush.... Kalinovich noted all this with the interest and delight in nature so often displayed by respectable young men used to the life of cities, all the time picturing to himself with a beating heart that in a few hours he would be seeing that dainty young lady. And since nothing is so conducive to day-dreams as driving, exceedingly audacious ideas began to form in his mind: "What if she were to fall in love with me... and I became the owner of this phaeton and these four horses... rich... the husband of a beauty... a famous author. But what about Nastenka?" he suddenly asked himself, and involuntarily there rose before him the mournful image of the poor girl who had kissed him so fervently and pressed so desperately against his breast the evening before.... The author ventures to assure the reader that at this moment two loves existed within the breast of his hero, which, though never admitted in novels, God knows, is a situation constantly arising in real life. Kalinovich had come to love Nastenka, and still loved her for her love of him; he understood and deeply appreciated her exquisite nature, and, last but not least, he had become used to her. His feelings for the Count's daughter were rather of an aesthetic nature. It was adoration of beauty, reinforced by the fact that it would be a very good match for him.

When they had passed through the woods they were on the Count's property, and Kalinovich immediately real-

ized that he was driving through the demesne of a modern proprietor. The narrow path had become a highroad. On either side were sown flax and clover. In the furrows between winter crops lay heaps of rotting chips, and in the meadows mounds of dug-up roots, and the meandering ditches through these meadows evidently had a purpose of their own. A long building with a tall chimney emitting thick smoke suggesting steam-power, peeped from out of a copse. The carriage, skirting a garden so regularly laid out that from a distance it looked like a carpet, with a huge round flower-bed in front of the house, at last drew up before the entrance. A comely young footman in a handsome jacket and white waistcoat, probably promoted from a barber's shop, came running out to meet them, and deftly letting down the steps of the phaeton, supported Kalinovich lightly as he jumped out.

"Do you wish to go straight to the Count or to your room?" he asked, holding his head politely on one side.

"I should like to go and change first," replied Kalinovich after a moment's thought.

"This way, please," said the footman and threw open the door leading to the downstairs rooms. Kalinovich followed him into a regular apartment for male visitors, consisting of several rooms. Turkish sofas, upholstered in velveteen, were everywhere, in the corners were fireplaces; on the walls, hung with wallpaper in imitation of corduroy, were faintly indecorous oil-paintings in gilt frames. The floors were carpeted with thick green cloth. Into these luxuriously furnished rooms the footman carried Kalinovich's small dusty trunk, proudly unlocking a carved walnut door, and revealing a porcelain wash-basin and a tub of the same material. Never had my hero felt his own poverty to be so hateful as at that moment. After washing his hands and face he said to the servant:

"You may go now, my good man. I am accustomed to dressing myself."

The footman bowed and went away. Kalinovich hastened to change to his only dress-suit and throw what he had taken off into the trunk, which he locked, placing the key in his pocket, for fear the Count's servants should look through his things and make fun of his wardrobe, which comprised mended lawn shirts, worn waistcoats, and a shaving brush with a cracked wooden handle.

Another footman came in, an older man with a still more respectable countenance, wearing a frock-coat and a white waistcoat.

"His Excellency bids me inquire where you would like to drink tea—here or upstairs?" he said.

"I will go to him," replied Kalinovich.

The footman led him up to the second floor. First they passed through a vast hall with walls of imitation marble, and then through a kind of drawing-room with a few small sofas scattered here and there, into the main drawing-room with its heavy velvet draperies, and at last, after traversing a small room, lined with mirrors, and adorned with porcelain figures, he found himself in a dining-room, from which a balcony opened upon a terrace overlooking the garden. There Kalinovich saw the Count and his whole family seated at a round table, on which were a silver samovar, a tea-service, and breakfast dishes in the English fashion—a platter of toast, Finnish butter, cheese, veal, game and ham sandwiches, and even a dish of hot rissoles. The Count, wearing a frock-coat of thin grey cloth, a lightly knotted tie, rose as Kalinovich entered.

"I was just coming to fetch you," he said, going up to him and putting his arms round him.

The Countess bowed quite kindly to the visitor from her easy chair. Her daughter, in a simple but probably expensive dress, with her hair charmingly arranged, also

bent her head ever so little. In addition to the hosts there were a fair-haired lady with a tightly corsetted figure and in an elaborate cap who was pouring out tea, and an extremely dark gentleman with a beard and moustache and a most expressive countenance, who wore a fashionable summer jacket and a monocle hanging round his neck. Next to him was a pretty little boy of about ten, extremely like the Countess and her daughter, in a red silk peasant blouse, with his hair trimmed *à la moujik*. The gentleman with the mobile countenance was spreading butter on bread, telling the little boy with obvious relish the right way to do this. From the Count's introductions Kalinovich learned that the gentleman was Monsieur le Grand, the little boy's tutor, and the lady was Mrs. Nettlebeth, formerly the governess of the young Countess and now living permanently in the Count's house, some said from friendship, while others hinted that the Count had acquired her small capital and was paying her interest on it, thus binding her to his house. Mrs. Nettlebeth offered Kalinovich tea.

"Won't you have something to eat?" said the Count. "We dine late."

Kalinovich, who never ate anything before two o'clock, but did not wish to give himself away, began looking about him, and Monsieur le Grand pressed rissoles upon him, praising them loudly, especially the spinach which went with them.

After breakfast the company dispersed. Monsieur le Grand took his pupil away to practise gymnastics. The Countess ordered her arm-chair to be taken out to the terrace, on which the Count wondered if it was not draughty there, but the Countess said it was all right, there was no wind. Mrs. Nettlebeth went to the terrace, too, seating herself silently and beginning to work on her embroidery with a severe expression on her face. After this the Count invited Kalinovich, if he was not

tired, to go with him to the fields. Kalinovich of course expressed his consent.

"I'll go with you, too, Papa," cooed the young Countess.

Kalinovich's heart beat with ecstasy.

"*Allons!*" said the Count, and while the girl went to dress he led his visitor into his own room, a discreetly and luxuriously furnished study. The stuffed morocco furniture, the huge writing-table, were all from Turov. The walls were hung with clocks, barometers, thermometers and family portraits. A room opening out of it, visible through the open door, had a billiard table in the middle, and in the corner a turner's lathe. The Count, who worked with his mind for several hours a day, made it a rule, as he said, to exercise his limbs, too.

"How nice to be rich!" thought Kalinovich and sighed from the innermost depths of his being.

The young Countess came in, wearing a rustic straw hat and a light cloak.

"*Allons!*" said the Count again and, he too donning a rustic grey hat, led them into the garden. As they passed through glass-houses and hot-houses the young Countess displayed spontaneous delight on discovering that the tiniest bud in the rosarium had come out, and that the only orange on a huge tree was swelling and ripening. Once in the fields the Count began telling Kalinovich about his farming plans, but the young Countess pointed to a bird in the distant sky and asked:

"What's that bird, Papa?"

"A crow, *chère amie*, a crow," replied the Count and, making them all retrace their footsteps through the grounds, sent his daughter to her room, and led Kalinovich to the stables where he ordered a breed stallion to be brought out. The piebald stallion, nervous, foaming at the mouth, pranced out, with the stableman hanging on to its halter. In the middle of the yard, holding up its

head, it looked round from wise black eyes, then drooped its head again, whinnied and began pawing the ground with its hoof. The Count patted its mane affectionately, and sent for its measurements, when it was found that the stallion was about six hands high.

Kalinovich sincerely admired all that he saw and heard, and, since love throws quite a different light on everything in our eyes, the question about the crow seemed to him simply entrancing.

"You have certainly created for yourself a heaven on earth," he said to the Count.

"Yes . . . what are we prosaic people to do but look after material blessings?" he answered, and, asking his guest to dispose of his own time without the least ceremony, he apologized and went back to his study to see to his domestic affairs. Kalinovich made for the terrace in the hope of seeing the young Countess, but there was no one there excepting the Countess, pensively gazing at the hills beyond the garden. As if anxious to entertain the young man, she asked him, after a few minutes of meditation, where he came from. And when Kalinovich replied that he came from Simbirsk she wanted to know if it was far away. He replied that it was, and the Countess, her curiosity apparently satisfied, said no more, but continued to gaze at the visitor so mournfully, so sorrowfully that he began to feel quite embarrassed.

"Why does she seem to pity me, to grieve over me?" he asked himself and he too was unable to find an opening for conversation. Very soon, however, the joyful cries of the young Countess sounded from the house, and the little Count came running out, hopping and clapping his hands, and crying: "My auntie has come!" "My auntie" turned out to be Paulina, who followed him, accompanied by the Count, the young Countess, and Monsieur le Grand. The Countess was very glad to see her and

noticed immediately that she had on a new riding-habit, very skilfully braided.

"How nice it is, how pretty!" she exclaimed, examining the costume.

"*C'est très joli, maman,*" put in the young Countess eagerly.

"Bah! And I, vandal that I am, never noticed!" exclaimed the Count, taking out his lorgnette and examining Paulina through it.

"*Charmant, charmant,*" he said.

Monsieur le Grand paid a compliment to Paulina herself, more or less to the effect that she was beautiful in that attire; Paulina granted him a slight smile in reply and turned to Kalinovich.

"I see you don't like my riding-habit, Mr. Kalinovich?"

"On the contrary. I say nothing, but I admire in silence," he replied, glancing significantly at the young Countess, who responded with a somewhat prolonged gaze.

Paulina had come in her habit because a ride was planned for after dinner, the young Countess, Monsieur le Grand and the little Count all being ardent devotees of riding.

"And will you come with us, Monsieur Kalinovich?" asked Paulina during the meal.

"I?" he began.

"I suppose you're afraid," remarked the young Countess suddenly.

"What makes you think that?" said Kalinovich, stung by the remark.

"You're a civilian. All civilians are afraid," replied the young Countess.

"I'm not afraid," said Kalinovich.

The cavalcade assembled immediately after dinner. Monsieur le Grand appeared just with the little Count, who had long been a prey to impatience, and now ran

skipping to the stables to watch the horses being saddled. The young Countess, who was also in high spirits, hastily donned her riding-habit. Her mother gently implored her for God's sake to be careful and not on any account to trot.

"I add my entreaties to your mother's, my daughter," chimed in the Count, "otherwise this will be your last ride."

"I'll be all right," replied the young Countess gaily.

"I won't let her," promised Paulina.

"Please don't!" cried the Count and Countess in one voice.

When the horses were led up in front of the entrance the Count went out to help the ladies mount. The little Count and Monsieur le Grand were already in the saddle, the former on a black pony, le Grand on a very lively trotter. Paulina and the little Countess were mounted on handsome but quiet animals. Kalinovich, too, by the Count's orders, was supplied with a horse that was not too young and lively. In declaring to the young Countess that he was not afraid, my hero had not told the truth. He had never been astride a horse in his life and at the sight of his steed's gleaming hide, its arched neck held in position by the snaffle, the foam on the bit, he almost died of fright. Anxious, however, to conceal his fears, he calmly put one foot into the stirrup.

"Not that side, Mr. Kalinovich, that's not the side to mount," cried Monsieur le Grand.

The little Count burst out laughing.

"It makes no difference," remarked the Count.

"It makes no difference," echoed Kalinovich, in his confusion tugging at the reins. The horse immediately backed. Kalinovich had no idea how to handle it.

"Don't hold the reins so tight," the Count told him, seeing Kalinovich's predicament. He relaxed his hold, and they all set off. Le Grand now urged his mount for-

ward, now checked it, affording the young Countess and the little Count enormous pleasure, the little fellow digging the spurs into his horse's sides and galloping.

"*Bien, bien!*" cried the Frenchman, galloping after him. The young Countess, fired by their example, set her own horse to the gallop. Kalinovich remained behind with Paulina.

"I'm afraid our country pleasures are not very interesting to you," she said.

"What makes you think that?" responded Kalinovich, more interested in his horse than in her words, for it was displaying a tendency to gallop, and he had not the slightest idea that this was because, in his desire to keep his seat, he was ruthlessly squeezing its sides with his shins.

"You are thinking of your writing all the time," said Paulina.

Kalinovich said nothing.

"What a joy it must be," she continued earnestly, "to be able to write what you feel and think! How I would like to have such a gift, and be able to write my life!"

"Well, why don't you?" said Kalinovich at last, still unable to manage his horse.

"I can't write," replied Paulina, "but I've always longed to become intimate with some poet, you know, to whom I could tell all my past, and who would be able to explain much that I do not understand myself, and would write about me. . . ."

Kalinovich looked ahead of him into the distance without replying.

"The young Countess is galloping, you have not fulfilled your promise to her mother," he observed.

"So she is! Do call out and tell her not to," replied Paulina.

"Countess, your father asked you not to gallop," shouted Kalinovich in French. The girl did not hear him, and

he shouted again, till she reined in her horse and waited for them to catch her up. She was very pretty, with her slender graceful figure outlined by the blue habit, her hat pressed rather low on her forehead, her flushed cheeks; she and her grey horse stood out picturesquely against the green background, and at that moment my hero forgot all else—Paulina, Nastenka, even his horse....

Nothing of note happened during the evening. Paulina, at the Count's request, played the piano a great deal, and Kalinovich pretended to listen to her, occasionally stealing a glance at the young Countess, who, for her part, cast rapid, steady glances in his direction every now and then.

V

The twenty-first of July was the Count's name-day. For a full understanding of his rural majesty in all its glory one should have visited him at his estate precisely on that day. From early in the morning at least five chefs and undercooks could be seen at work through the open windows of the kitchen, all in white caps and aprons. They chopped in unison at joints of meat, whipped up all sorts of substances in saucepans, and over them all the late General's chef reigned in state. The Count always borrowed him for grand dinners, not so much from necessity as to give pleasure to the old man, who was immensely proud to be invited. About nine o'clock in the morning the Count and Kalinovich went to prayers in the chapel.

As soon as watchers in the belfry caught sight of their carriage the bells were set pealing; the priest and the deacon donned their best vestments, made from the brocade pall which had covered the coffin of the Count's mother; the clerk and sexton, with loosened tresses and in surplices, served as a sort of choir together with two holiday-making seminary scholars—a philosopher who

sang the bass and a grammarian who sang the treble. At the end of the service a cake of consecrated bread was bestowed upon the hero of the day, and half a cake upon Kalinovich.

"Come to dinner at my house," said the Count to the priest and deacon when he approached to kiss the cross, and both accepted with respectful bows. His name-day was the only occasion on which he invited them to dinner.

As they passed through the open space in front of the house, the Count pointed out to Kalinovich some long tables which had just been placed there, as well as swings and a giant stride.

"That's for the people. You will see quite an animated crowd here," he told him.

"You think of the people, too!" exclaimed Kalinovich in tones of surprise and approval.

"Yes, I like to give them pleasure when possible," admitted the Count.

There was already a visitor in the hall—the newly-appointed commissary of district police, a man still young but terribly pockmarked, in a tightly buttoned uniform, with a silver chain dangling from a buttonhole like an order. When the Count entered he drew himself up and said in formal tones:

"I have the honour to introduce myself: Commissary of District Police, Romanus."

"Delighted to make your acquaintance," replied the Count, pressing his hand.

"I would also make so bold as to congratulate you on your name-day," continued the young man.

"Thanks, thanks!" replied the Count, again pressing the commissary's hand.

"I must apologize," continued the commissary, "for having hitherto, owing to my official duties, been unable to pay a call on Your Excellency."

"Oh, I know how hard your duties are," the Count hastened to reassure him.

"Our duties, Your Excellency, would be pleasant if only we ourselves were different. My predecessor, as Your Excellency is possibly aware, left me a regular muddle to disentangle."

"I know, I know! But I hear you are setting things to rights," replied the Count, although he knew very well that the former commissary, while undoubtedly a drunkard, had been an able and energetic individual, whereas the new one was a useless fool. His tactics, however, required that at first he should treat the new-comer indulgently, and the latter, extremely pleased with his reception, thrust the left thumb between the two bottom buttons of his frock-coat and began pacing up and down the hall, his head swaying from side to side.

The priests arrived and once more congratulated the illustrious hero of the day, while the graduate in philosophy, stepping forward, recited a congratulatory speech, beginning with the invocation: "Reverend Chief!" The Count heard him out gravely and handed him a three-ruble note. The priest and the deacon were given tea and refreshments separately, and the rest of the visitors were sent to the bailiff's quarters to receive the hospitality due to them.

Having arranged all this to his liking the Count at last turned to Kalinovich and invited him, in French, to the dining-room, where a still more touching scene of congratulations was being enacted. The first to run and throw his arms round the Count's neck was his son, who cried:

"Je vous félicite, papa."

The Count kissed him on the lips, cheeks and eyes.

"Je vous félicite, mon comte," said Monsieur le Grand, bowing.

"Merci, mon cher, merci," the Count replied with feeling.

The young Countess, in a light and airy muslin robe, with innumerable flounces, an expression of sweet gaiety on her face, went up to her father, kissed his hand and gave him a valuable tortoise shell cigarette case, on one side of which was mounted a cotton square with a silk embroidered rose on it. This gift was of her own making, embroidered in secret, and sent in secret to Moscow, to be mounted.

"Charmant! Charmant!" exclaimed the Count, examining the gift.

Then Mrs. Nettlebeth rose from behind the samovar and, curtsying demurely, congratulated the Count, handing him a small packet—apparently containing a pair of silk socks knitted by her own hands.

"How nice to have a name-day—everyone gives you presents! I'm ready to celebrate several times a year," said the Count, pressing Mrs. Nettlebeth's hand. "Well, and you, Your Excellency?" he continued, as he went up to the Countess, and, taking her chin in his hand, gave her a prolonged kiss. "What have you got for me?"

"Nothing," she replied, smiling sweetly.

"There's a wife for you! Never gives me anything!" said the Count, turning to Kalinovich.

The Countess continued to smile sweetly, and Kalinovich smiled too.

At one o'clock the ladies retired to the great drawing-room and visitors began to arrive. The Count met them in the hall. First came the lawyer with his wife, the pretty daughter of the mayor, who was already in an interesting condition, much to her confusion, though her husband appeared to glory in it. The judge brought the director of the military hospital and the inspector of distilleries in his phaeton. The Count accorded the judge a fairly respectful reception, since he had some small

matters before the court, but merely bestowed a few formal words of greeting on his companions, and when the visitors were conducted to the drawing-room to the hostess, the judge stayed behind to entertain the ladies, while the hospital director and the inspector of distilleries went back to the hall and joined the more suitable company of the priest and the commissary of district police. The postmaster came too—alone. The chancery clerk had pestered him to take him with him, but he had refused. The Count met the old man with a cordial exclamation: "How are you, most estimable ancient?"

The postmaster congratulated him in his flat, mournful voice, and immediately begged the Count's leave to take a walk in what he called the latter's "*Champs Elysées*."

"You will be doing me a favour," replied the Count.

The old man, without so much as paying his respects to the ladies, put on his worn straw hat and went to the garden where, plunged in profound meditation, he began pacing its dark alleys.

In the meanwhile the superintendent of police and his family had arrived. He removed some bits of tow from his ears as soon as he came in, and placed them carefully in his waistcoat pocket, before meekly following his wife and daughter, a young girl only just released from boarding-school, but very plump, with a bust much too imposing for a girl of seventeen. She was of course immediately introduced to the young Countess, who offered her a seat next to herself and fixed a serene cold gaze on her.

The Count was looking out of the window with narrowed eyes.

"Who's that?" he asked.

An old dilapidated *droshky* drawn by three sorry hacks dashed into the yard in style. The harness, however, was studded with brass ornaments, and the coachman had on a faded blue robe confined at the waist by a dingy silver belt. It was that youthful nobleman Kadnikov, mentioned

in the first part of this book—he who was so fond of bathing in the river. He had been sent to the name-day celebrations by his mother, who wanted him to appear in good society, and there was something very off-hand in the manners of the young man, with his curled hair, his new frock-coat, and his bloodshot eyes. After bowing and scraping to the Count, he went straight up to the young Countess, sat down beside her and began showering questions on her.

“How are you feeling?”

“Quite well, thank you,” replied the young Countess.

“How are you getting on?”

“Quite well, thank you,” she repeated and glanced at Kalinovich, who stood at a window regarding the young man ironically.

“It’s a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you!” said Kadnikov, turning to the daughter of the police superintendent, who replied inarticulately, blushing violently. Having spoken to the girls, he turned to the Countess herself.

“How splendid your barley is, Your Excellency!” he exclaimed. “I couldn’t take my eyes off it as I passed your fields.”

“Is it? I haven’t seen it,” replied the Countess.

“It’s wonderful! My mama will have neither spring corn nor rye this year. They planted the winter crops very late, simply flung the seed into the mud. And as for the oats, I don’t know what’s wrong—the seed must have been bad. Very disagreeable.”

“It must be,” agreed the Countess.

The Count, who had been walking about the drawing-room, hastened to drown the young man’s chatter by addressing the judge in loud accents:

“When are you expecting your Governor, Mikhailo Illarionich?”

“We don’t know. He keeps threatening, but doesn’t

come. . . . Goodness knows what God will send us! They say he's very strict," replied the judge, stroking his hat.

"Not strict—practical," said the Count. "In the loftiness of his feeling he is a modern knight," he continued, seating himself beside the judge and tapping him on the knee. "I've known him since he was an ensign, he and I went through the campaign of 'twenty-eight together, almost slept under the same greatcoat. I rejoiced when I heard he had been appointed our Governor. He will be an acquisition for the gubernia."

The judge listened to all this with the utmost indifference, for the Count pronounced the same laudatory words about every new governor.

"You haven't seen His Excellency yet?" he inquired.

"Not yet. I'm hoping he will stop here and visit my obscure corner on his way," replied the Count.

"Try and put in a good word for me," said the judge with a smile.

"Good heavens!" cried the Count, "it will be my first duty, especially with regard to your district court, which, without the slightest flattery, may be called a model of a district court."

Kadnikov, unable to get a word in while such grave talk was going on, suddenly rose, crossed the room and stamped up to Kalinovich, asking him whether he had a cigarette.

"I'm afraid not. You can't smoke here, anyhow," replied the latter coldly.

"Oh, I see," said Kadnikov and betook himself to the hall at last.

There the director of the hospital was chatting with the distillery inspector, complaining of one of the red-haired Mediokritskys who, he said, shot sparrows in his kitchen garden every morning.

Kadnikov took part in this talk, standing up for Mediokritsky so eagerly and shouting so loudly that everything

he said could be heard in the drawing-room. The Count merely frowned. There could be no sort of doubt that the young man, who was usually so discreet, and no fool, was drunk. There was nothing to be done about it! Overcome with timidity and embarrassment at the thought of calling on the Count in such a wealthy fashionable house, he had swallowed two glasses of unsweetened cordials to give himself courage, and now they were making themselves felt.

The so-called local aristocracy began to arrive round about four. First came the General's widow, who was carried in on a chair and set down next to the hostess. After her came Paulina in a simple summer frock, but wearing diamonds worth at least twenty thousand rubles. She immediately got into conversation with Kalinovich. Quite unexpectedly the Marshal of the Nobility now entered. He and the Count were sworn foes, and tried to injure one another at every step they took, but for the sake of appearances the Count led him to his study, where they embarked upon an intimate friendly conversation as to the complaints made by the spinster proprietress to the Governor of her two rebellious chubby-cheeked serving maids, who had run away from her and stayed away a whole week.

Last of all came a gentleman in an elegant carriage drawn by six horses, a most remarkably stout gentleman, with a pasty complexion, a sleepy countenance and a pendulous double chin. He wore light trousers and a light waistcoat over a shirt which was almost entirely unbuttoned, but even so he suffered intensely from the heat. Breathing heavily and stepping languidly, he began ascending the stairs, and when his arrival was announced to the Count, the latter rushed forward to greet him.

The Marshal made a comic face, but he too went to meet the fat man. The Countess, who had seen his ar-

rival from the window, also showed signs of anxiety. The young Countess's eyes were fixed on the door. From the hall came exclamations: "*Mais comment . . . voilà c'est un. . .*" At last the guest plunged into the drawing-room, accompanied by the Count and the Marshal. The Countess, who had greeted all the ladies from a sitting position, rose on his arrival and offered her hand to him. Even the General's widow seemed to come out of her meditations and bowed to him several times.

"*Bonjour, Mesdames,*" lisped the fat man, and pressing the Countess's hand he let himself down unceremoniously on the sofa next to her, making the marble cupids at either end shake and sway.

He paid not the slightest attention to anyone else in the drawing-room, except that, catching sight of the Count's daughter, he inclined his head and said:

"*Bonjour, Mademoiselle.*"

"*Bonjour,*" she replied with her sweet smile.

This individual was a certain Chetverikov, a bachelor, who held a lien in several gubernias, and was an important shareholder in some gold mines in Siberia. All of this he had inherited from his father, and everything went on as before, without the least efforts on his part. All that could be said of him was that he was close-fisted, something of a coxcomb, and spent all his time reading French novels and newspapers, that he ate excessively and was incessantly travelling from his estate, which was next to the Count's, to Siberia, and from Siberia to Moscow or Petersburg. When asked where he spent the most time, he replied: "In my carriage."

Kalinovich took an immediate dislike to him. He had been disagreeably impressed by the extraordinary respect with which the host and hostess had greeted Chetverikov. He communicated this to Paulina, who smiled and whispered back:

"Oh yes, great hopes are placed on him here! He may be a husband for Catherine."

"A husband for the Count's daughter?" exclaimed Kalinovich involuntarily.

"And why not! It would be a splendid match," replied Paulina, not without a somewhat ambiguous smile.

Kalinovich frowned.

The procession to the dining-room was solemn in the extreme, the gentlemen offering the ladies their arms in the approved fashion. Perhaps nowhere are the invisible labels showing the prestige of each guest attached with such diplomatic subtlety and precision as at grand dinners in the country. In the present instance also this system was adhered to, and the social weight of each one was immediately defined. First of all went the hostess on the arm of Chetverikov, after them came the General's widow in her chair, the Count, with an air of supporting her on his arm, walking beside it. Kadnikov was about to spring to the side of the young Countess, but the Marshal gave the young man a slight push with his elbow, and took his place. Paulina herself invited Kalinovich to take her in, the judge took in the superintendent's wife, whose husband took in the lawyer's wife, while the superintendent's daughter fell to the lawyer. A few guests, whom the Count had not seen fit to invite to the drawing-room, remained behind in the hall. These were three clerks from the Gubernatorial Office and two impoverished gentlemen with sunburnt faces whose wives wore woollen shawls. The repast, which was all that was French and refined, passed with the utmost propriety. At first, as is usually the case, conversation was carried on only at the aristocratic end of the table, that is to say, between Chetverikov, the Count, and to a slight extent the Marshal; but by the end of the meal, after a few glasses of wine had been drunk, the other guests became talkative too.

Once more Kadnikov began arguing with the director of the military hospital, the police commissary whispered to the superintendent, and at last even the postmaster, till then listening in obstinate silence to what Chetverikov and the Count were saying about Siberia, suddenly turned to his neighbour, who happened to be Kalinovich, with the words:

"A French scientist says that if the whole of Europe were to be transferred to Siberia, there would still be lots of room left in it."

Kalinovich smiled, unable to find anything to say to this.

After dinner the Count invited everyone to a terrace overlooking the open space in front of the house. There was a view from it in three directions. Groups of women and girls were scattered on the road across the fields belonging to the estate, their parti-coloured kerchiefs showing above the rye, which had grown very tall; others walked half-hidden in the unmown grass in the meadows. Here and there the dark greyish figures of peasants appeared in twos and threes. The drive itself was seething with country folk. Women and girls in print sarafans, in silk or even brocade padded jackets, with vivid kerchiefs on their heads, and bead-embroidered ribbons on their foreheads, passed by in a regular crowd.

Two youths—the postilions of the Marshal and the Count—were swinging two visiting lady's maids, propelling them as high as the cross-beam and shaking the ropes, making the girls squeal. Some priests' daughters and the wife of a clerk were revolving on the roundabouts, which the cowherd, squeezed against the cylinder in the middle, was working by hand. Madame Shevalova's skinny footman stood leaning against a wall watching the crowd with a most melancholy expression, and the youthful footman of the Marshal smoked a cigar stub, hiding behind the corner of a wall every time he

exhaled smoke for fear the gentry should see him. The Count's black Newfoundland, its head and tail drooping, moved imperturbably amidst this crowd, much to the terror of the women and girls.

"Oh, girls, look at the dog!" they cried, clinging to one another.

The Count, coming out on to the terrace, bowed to the assembled people and signalled to his daughter with his eyes. She disappeared and a few minutes later reappeared down below, holding her little brother by the hand. After her came two footmen carrying huge trays, on which were piled spice-buns, lengths of ribbon, and braid. To Kalinovich she looked like a sylph as she flitted about the crowd, handing the women and girls buns and ribbons, and crying:

"Take it, dearie, it's for you!"

It cannot be said that the recipients fell upon these gifts with any particular display of pleasure or eagerness. The girls took them with unhurried gestures, blushing and embarrassed, and the older women laughed. Some even said:

"Why put yourself to all that trouble, Missie? That's not what we came for."

The only one who snatched at the spice-buns and ate them up at once, and who examined and exclaimed over the braid, was a barefoot orphan girl in a print sarafan. Two old women stopped the little Countess, one, who was half-blind, patting her on the shoulder and bursting into tears, with the words: "The image of her grandmother!" The other insisted on the little Count accepting an egg, stained a bright crimson. He was going to refuse, but his sister let him take it and rewarded the old woman with a handful of buns. The latter seized the girl's white fingers in her own sunburnt bony hand and showered kisses on them. The young Countess in her

fastidiousness suffered agonies, but managed to overcome her distaste.

"Gi' me a wibbon, Missie," cried the idiot from the village of Spiridonovka. His head was twisted to one side, and his toes pointed backward.

The young Countess simply could not bear the sight of him. Throwing a bunch of ribbons to him, she turned from him precipitately.

"Wibbons! Wibbons!" cried the idiot, clapping his hands and hopping.

Some little boys standing near him gaped open-mouthed at the ribbons and braid in his hands.

When she had distributed all the presents, the little Countess ran up the terrace steps to her father and kissed him, apparently for having given her the opportunity to do so much good. Then three buckets of vodka, several barrels of beer, and vast quantities of pies were set out. The Count's butler, in a frock-coat and white waistcoat, came to distribute the vodka. Leaning his elbow on the table he called out to the nearest of the crowd: "Hi, you! Get a move on! Come up here!"

The men exchanged glances, nobody wanted to be the first.

"Well—aren't you coming?" asked the butler.

At last a lean, stooping old man in a wide robe of black homespun, which was belted very low and hung in a pouch in front, emerged from the crowd. This was one of the most miserly and well-behaved of the Count's peasants, a man who loved to drink at someone else's expense, but never drank at his own. Having swallowed his portion of vodka, he turned to the beer and picking up a pitcher with both hands blew off the foam and drank till he was almost suffocated, after which he grabbed a thick slice of pie, bowed silently and went away. Encouraged by his example, other peasants approached. The only one who was in any way conspicuous was the

priest's servant, a shaggy, broad-shouldered fellow, with a perfectly flat face, in a woman's petticoat and bast shoes, a hard-working fellow, but so retarded mentally that he could not even count. When he came forward everyone in the crowd laughed. He laughed himself and, after drinking his vodka, made as if to go back.

"Don't you want any beer?" asked the butler.

Turning again he gulped down a whole pitcher as if it had been a small glass. There was laughter in the crowd again, in which he joined, waving his hand before disappearing.

When the men had had their drinks it was the time for the women. No one stirred.

"Come on!" the butler urged them.

"You go, Mother Pelageya, why don't you budge?" at last came from the crowd.

"No, no, sisters! I haven't taken anything for over a year," objected Pelageya.

"Get along with you and your 'haven't taken anything,' you sly thing!" said a tall, severe-looking woman with a deep bass voice. She came forward, drank and bowed to the butler.

"Bow to the Count," he told her.

"We're just a lot of sillies, dear soul, we don't know how to behave. Excuse us," replied the woman, as she went away.

Renewed efforts were made to send Pelageya but she would not budge.

"Why don't you go, affected thing? Are you afraid? Eh—there she goes!" said a jolly-looking woman of about thirty-five, pushing Pelageya forward.

"It's a sin! What are our women coming to?" said Pelageya. But she went up to the table and, drinking half the glass offered her, made a face and tried to give the glass back.

"Why don't you drink it down?" asked the butler.

"Oh, Sir, I can't manage it!" replied the woman. But she did manage it and a huge ladle of beer into the bargain.

After Pelageya came the jolly woman. She gulped down a glass of vodka and exchanged a quick suspicious glance with the Count's scullion.

Only one more devotee of vodka was found among the women, the half-blind old woman who had patted the little Countess on the shoulder. She was led up by another woman, a charitable soul.

"Give her some, kind Sir," she said to the butler. "The old woman still drinks."

The butler handed her a glass. The old woman sipped at the vodka with relish and when a pie was put into her trembling hand she began crossing herself and muttering a prayer.

The ones who now came forward only drank beer, but showed their mettle. A little woman scarcely five foot high downed over a quart.

The slight intoxication made their heads go round and raised their spirits. The crowd became animated. Talk and songs could be heard here and there. A wide circle was formed, in the middle of which the jolly woman tripped backwards and forwards, waving a handkerchief and stamping, while the Count's scullion crouched in front of her, shooting out first one leg and then another, as if he were paid to do it.

Farther away, almost as far as the farm buildings, a few men stood singing in chorus. One voice soared above all the rest, in such high pure harmony that even the gentry folk on the terrace began to listen.

"*C'est charmant*," said the Count, turning to the fat gentleman.

"*Oui*," replied the other.

"I wonder who it is," said the Count, listening still more attentively.

"It's my coachman, Your Excellency," said the commissary of police, leaping to his feet.

"Delightful, delightful!" said the Count.

The commissary smiled complacently.

"I keep him chiefly for his voice, Your Excellency," he said. "I am a German by extraction, but I like the Russian songs."

"Delightful!" repeated the Count. "We must get him to come nearer," he added, turning to Chetverikov.

"*Oui*," said that gentleman.

"This minute, Your Excellency!" put in the police commissary and ran off.

A few minutes later he led the singer to the terrace. At the general request he sang "Luchinushka." The spiritual yearning in this song could be felt in every trill.

The Countess, her daughter, and Paulina turned their lorgnettes upon the singer. Monsieur le Grand stuck his monocle into his eye—everyone wanted to see the singer. He turned out to be a flaxen-haired lad with great blue eyes—nothing more.

"What a beautiful face!" said Paulina to Kalinovich.

"Yes," was all he could find to say in reply. He had other things to think about at that moment. The young Countess was standing near him, her body half-turned away, and, wishing to test his power over her, he tried to magnetize her with his eyes, concentrating tensely on this one desire—that she should look at him. And all of a sudden, as if involuntarily, the young Countess did turn her head and, raising her eyelashes, looked in his direction, after which she gave a slight smile and turned away again. This was repeated several times.

When the singer stopped, the Countess was the first to clap softly, and everyone followed her example and clapped. The fat gentleman, in addition to this, threw him ten silver rubles, the Count threw another ten, the

Marshal three, and so on. The lad did not understand what it was all about.

"Pick up the money! What are you staring at, fool?" the police commissary whispered in his ear.

"I see you liked it," said the director of the hospital to the postmaster, who had been listening with profound attention and closed eyes.

"Spiritual singing," he said.

"That's just what it is. Why don't you give him something?" said the director of the hospital, winking at the judge.

For all reply the postmaster merely raised his eyes to the sky and muttered: "Oh, Lord, have mercy on us, have mercy!"

Just then Shevalova's serf-orchestra struck up in the ball-room, and the whole company trooped into the house. The Count, Chetverikov and the Marshal embarked upon an extremely serious game of preference in the drawing-room, and the judge, the police superintendent and the distilleries inspector started one for lower stakes.

Kalinovich went up to ask the young Countess for a dance, but Kadnikov was there before him.

"I'm engaged, Mr. Kalinovich," she said in a voice that was somewhat mournful.

Kalinovich manifested his regret with a bow and begged her at least to keep the second quadrille for him.

"Certainly . . . I shall be very glad . . . I have such a horrid partner," rejoined the girl.

Kalinovich bowed once more, left her, and invited Paulina, who pressed his hand warmly. Their *vis-à-vis* was Monsieur le Grand, whose partner was the lawyer's pretty wife. Despite her interesting condition she attracted the Frenchman to the point of frenzy. He had been paying court to her since the morning, and kept her perpetually amused, though she could not speak a word

of French and he spoke Russian very badly, and how they understood one another God alone knows!

The hospital director, despite his greying moustache and hair and his wrinkled countenance, declared his desire to dance, too—no doubt because he was a military man and still wore the epaulettes of a lieutenant. He chose as his partner the daughter of the police superintendent, and took up his position opposite Kadnikov.

In order to fill up the quadrille and keep all the guests amused, the Countess summoned the lawyer and asked him, in strict secrecy, to invite the superintendent's wife to dance, for she showed signs of being offended at receiving so little attention. Their *vis-à-vis* were the little Count and Mrs. Nettlebeth, who began performing *chassé en avant* and *chassé en arrière* with pompous correctness.

After the quadrille came a waltz. Kalinovich could not refrain from asking the young Countess to dance with him, and she accepted with pleasure. At last his hand was on her waist, and he could feel the firm grasp of her little hand on his arm. Her breast, white as sea-foam, lay almost beneath his gaze, he inhaled the fragrance of her hair in a kind of intoxication. In vain did the young Countess, after a couple of turns, say: "Enough," he swept her on, turn after turn. "Enough," she said at last very decidedly. At last Kalinovich came to himself and, seating her in an arm-chair, sat down beside her. The young Countess was very tired—her eyes were weary, her breast rose and fell. She brushed her hair back from her temples with one hand. Kalinovich devoured her with his eyes. The quadrille began and forced them to rise.

"What are you writing now?" the young Countess inquired.

The question at first puzzled Kalinovich, but realizing what it meant he decided to take advantage of it.

"I am describing," he began, "a family . . . a rich family living, say, in Moscow and including, among others, a daughter—a clever girl, with a soul, as they say, but still, a society girl."

The young Countess listened.

"This girl," continued Kalinovich, "had the misfortune to inspire with love one who, as she herself knew, was worthy of her, though not on the same social level as herself. She knew that she was everything in the world for him, that he was falling into a decline, and that one kind word from her would bring him back to life."

The interest of the young Countess was visibly increasing.

"She knew all this," continued Kalinovich, "yet she found it in herself to laugh at such a passion when she was with her society friends."

"What is there to laugh at in it? I suppose she didn't like him," put in the young Countess.

Kalinovich shrugged his shoulders.

"She did," he replied, "but to do so ran counter to the rules of society. It was not ridiculous, not morally outrageous to marry some rich booby, *to sell herself*, for this was *done*! But a society girl cannot marry a poor man."

"Why can't she?" interrupted the young Countess eagerly. "A cousin of mine, a very wealthy girl, married a cavalry officer against her mother's will. He had nothing at all, but he was very good-looking and marvelously clever."

"A cavalry officer, you say," repeated Kalinovich.

He had spoken against society girls in the hope of forcing the young Countess to say she was not like them, and it seemed to him this was exactly what she meant by her objections and remarks, particularly since, after a little thought, she added in a whisper, as if she had been unable to make up her mind at first:

"Do dance the mazurka with me."

Kalinovich flushed with pleasure.

"I was just going to beg the honour," he said.

"Please do," she repeated.

Throughout the conversation, Paulina, who was sitting not far from them and did not dance any more, never took her eyes off them. While still on the terrace she had noticed Kalinovich's glances at the little Countess, and now, still further confirmed in her suspicions, she went unnoticed into the drawing-room, sat down next to the Count and, when he turned to her, whispered something in his ear.

"*Pardon*, just a minute!" said the Count, getting up and going with Paulina into a room at the back. He returned through the ball-room. Kalinovich was dancing the galop in the sixth figure of the mazurka with the little Countess, and when it was over, released her very slowly, slightly pressing her hand. She glanced at him and blushed.

None of this was lost on the Count. Passing his daughter as if by chance he said something to her in English. She blushed and disappeared immediately. The Count, too, disappeared. But the girl soon came back and sat down beside her mother with glowing cheeks.

Kalinovich went on dancing the quadrille with great reluctance, never saying a word to his partners, and waiting eagerly for the mazurka. As soon as it was announced he went up to the young Countess, who was now walking up and down the room on Paulina's arm.

"Isn't it time for us to begin?" he said.

Without answering him the young Countess turned to Paulina, saying: "Are you going to dance?"

"Yes, I am," replied the other mockingly.

The little Countess, apparently embarrassed, followed Kalinovich and sat down beside him. Try as he would to get her to talk she either sat silent or answered "yes"

and "no," and was apparently relieved when other cavaliers invited her to take part in the dance.

"The meaning of my story is apparently repeated at every step in real life," said Kalinovich at last, beginning to lose all patience. But the young Countess seemed not to have heard him.

In the meanwhile the card players came into the ball-room. The Count turned his lorgnette upon the dancers. Chetverikov stood beside him.

The young Countess chose him again and again, forcing him to dance. Each time he stepped forward with a prancing gait, danced a turn with her rather jerkily, and bowed. She curtsied and thanked him with her sweetest smile. Jealousy, vexation and anger seethed in Kalinovich's soul. He tried to think of something insolent to say to the young Countess, but even this he was unable to do. When the mazurka was over she merely nodded to him from a distance and went out of the room on Paulina's arm. Soon after, supper was announced and almost all the guests stayed the night.

The same subtle calculations on the part of the host ruled the allocation of sleeping quarters. Separate rooms were given to Chetverikov and the Marshal, each with its china wash-basin, fine lawn sheets and new quilts. A large room was set apart for the judge, the superintendent of police, the postmaster, and Kalinovich. Here the quilts, though of silk, were worn, and the wash-basins were of earthenware. In the adjacent chamber were the distilleries inspector, the director of the military hospital, and the youthful Kadnikov. There were no beds and they had to lie on sofas with hard cushions and print bed-covers.

Kalinovich, worn out by the sensations of the day, was the first to go downstairs, undress and lie down, in the hope of falling asleep soon. But it was impossible. After him came the postmaster and began making his

preparations for the night. When he had taken off his coat and trousers he fumbled a long time among his vests till he found a small coloured amulet against his chest which he removed and hung on a nail he had discovered on the wall above him. He then began praying, his lips moving almost soundlessly, every now and then exclaiming: "Lord have mercy on us, have mercy!" When his prayers were over the old man began slowly removing his undervests (he wore several), folding them carefully and placing them on the nearest chair. He then began to tighten the bandages on his boils, which took about a quarter of an hour, and finally, demanding a sheet instead of a quilt, he covered himself with it as if it were a shroud, right up to his chin, and stretched his tall figure full length on the mattress, and closed his eyes.

Kalinovich's hopes of falling asleep revived, but now the judge and the superintendent entered, each in his turn changing to silk dressing gowns made from old dresses of their wives, and soft boots of green morocco; then they sat on the side of their beds, coughing and hawking. And now the hospital director, who had been fasting since the morning, and was now smoking his fourth pipe running, came in from his room, accompanied by the youthful Kadnikov, incessantly pestering him to let him have just one pull. Obviously they were all tired of a whole day of propriety and *bon ton*, and wished to chatter at their ease.

"How dark the nights are getting!" said the judge, glancing at the window.

"Yes," responded the police superintendent. "Just right for thieves and miscreants. They steal, and the Zemstvo police has to take the responsibility."

"Call yourself the Zemstvo police!" interrupted the hospital director, wagging his head. "A mere empty name—police, indeed!"

"Well, why not? The police are the same here as everywhere else," said the police superintendent amiably.

"Oh no, they're not," said the hospital director. "In Moscow, now, there was Chief of Police Shulgin, that was a real chief of police. He had a police force."

"Yes, he was a sharp one," agreed the judge.

"He was a sharp one," repeated the hospital director, "and yet the Moscow rascals took him in, my dear Sir!"

The judge only chuckled.

"Yes, they did," said he.

"Yes, they took in the sharp one," remarked the superintendent not without asperity.

"They thought up such a trick, brother," continued the hospital director. "At some parade, or during service at church—think of that!—one of his coat-sleeves was cut off! Well, he had to put up with it. . . . But one morning, or perhaps it was in the evening, the policeman on duty comes to his butler: 'The General has sent us a coat-sleeve found by the police,' he said, 'and ordered me to find out if it comes from your master's overcoat or not.' The butler obeyed the General's command—he couldn't disobey it, you know. He handed over the coat and in the calmest manner goes on putting the chairs to rights, or polishing the dishes, and all of a sudden, no policeman and no overcoat. 'Oh,' he cries, 'now I've done for myself.' And just then in comes Shulgin. The butler throws himself at his feet: 'Oh, Sir, Your Excellency. . . .' 'Never mind, brother,' he says. 'You're a fool, but I was no better. Look what a note I got!' he says and shows it to him. It said in the note: 'We thank you humbly, Your Excellency, for letting us have the overcoat to your sleeve.' That's all."

The judge smiled again, shaking his head.

"The rogues!" he said.

"Rogues, they are!" agreed the narrator complacently.

Kalinovich was getting more and more furious, and he

cursed the petty gentry's odious habit of exchanging vulgar anecdotes about swindlers at any hour of the day or night. But his patience was to be still further tried—the youthful Kadnikov burned with a desire to tell a story too.

"Some rascals attacked Lukin once," he began.

"Lukin was a Hercules," the director of the hospital interposed—he much preferred telling stories to listening to them. "When he went to England in his ship, my sirs..." What Lukin did when he went to England in his ship all his listeners knew very well, but the director of the hospital, no whit abashed, went on: "A gentleman, he was a Hercules too, issued the following challenge: 'I'll sit in an iron arm-chair, dear sirs, and anyone who likes can give me a box on the ear. I to pay a hundred rubles if he knocks me down, he to pay double if I don't fall.' And that way he got a lot of money. But one day Lukin passed the place and asked: 'What's all this?' They told him. 'Ah, Monsieur, you're the very man I wanted to see!' He went straight up to him: 'Hold on tight!' he said. 'I'm Lukin.' The gentleman had heard of him, but he stood up for his honour. 'That's nothing,' he said. 'I'm so-and-so.' 'Good!' says Lukin, turning up his sleeves a little, you know, and crossing himself as we Christians do, and then he let out ... good heavens, our gentleman went flying—arm-chair, platform, and all! We heard him yelling for all he was worth. What had happened? Everybody went to see—his whole jaw was pushed on one side. 'That's nothing!' said Lukin, and he picked up the poor soul by the scruff of his neck and hit him on the other side, so that the jaw came straight again. 'Well,' he says, 'I don't want your money, but don't forget me.' 'I won't forget you,' the other says, 'I'll never forget you!'"

"So Lukin's strength was in his hands," put in Kadnikov. Having been unable to get in his anecdote about

rascals or strong men he decided at least to show off his own strength, and added: "Watch me pick up that chair by one leg."

"That's a light one. You can't lift that one!" the director of the hospital said, motioning with his head towards a very heavy arm-chair.

"Yes, I can," replied Kadnikov, and taking it by the leg he strained every muscle, went as red as a lobster, and lifted it, but could not hold it. The arm-chair swayed so violently that he only managed to prevent it from falling by pushing it against the wall right over Kalinovich's head.

The latter quite lost his temper.

"What's all this, gentlemen? When will there be an end of it?" he cried.

"We thought you were fast asleep," said the director of the hospital.

"How could anyone sleep with all this rubbish about rascals, and with chairs flying about overhead?" said Kalinovich, turning his face to the wall.

His severe and sarcastic tone put an end to the animated conversation.

"It really is time to go to sleep, gentlemen," said the judge.

"High time!" echoed the superintendent, and they all went to bed.

Kalinovich breathed more freely, but he still could not get to sleep. The postmaster, who had all this time been lying with closed eyes, began first to moan painfully, and then to rave, repeating over and over again the words: "He's come, he's come!" till he finally waked himself up with a shrill: "He's come!" and with the words: "Lord have mercy on us!" fell silent for a time. The superintendent and the judge then began snoring, not loudly, but steadily, as if competing with each other.

VI

The next day, as so often happens after solemn rustic festivities, the guests were excessively bored and desired only one thing: to get away as quickly as possible. And their hosts merely protested for the sake of appearances. So the motley horde departed immediately after breakfast, only the General's widow and her daughter, Chetverikov and the Marshal remaining to dinner. The whole morning Kalinovich sought an opportunity to get hold of the young Countess and ask her outright what the change in her behaviour signified, but all his efforts were frustrated. Paulina treated him with something like mockery. Infuriated by this behaviour but not knowing what to do with himself, he decided, after dinner, when the whole party dispersed, to go to his room and at least get some sleep, but a man came from the Count to ask him if he cared to go for a walk. Kalinovich went to the porch where the Count was waiting for him.

At first they went into the rye field, but then they crossed some meadows, and took the way through the woods, so that they were now over two miles from the house. The Count was unusually taciturn, only pointing out now and then some newly opening vista for Kalinovich's admiration. Kalinovich responded mechanically, for he was thinking of something quite different and hardly noticed the landscape. After they had crossed a ravine the Count suddenly halted, as if struck by some thought, and then said, turning to Kalinovich:

"Yakov Vasilich, I should like to ask you a perhaps somewhat indiscreet question."

Kalinovich reddened, and his first thought was: had the Count guessed his feelings for his daughter?

"If it's an indiscreet one, then why ask it?" he said half-jokingly.

"True," drawled the Count, "but you see I am moved to do so by a sincere desire for your welfare. I would rather risk indiscretion than hold my tongue."

Kalinovich could find no answer to this.

"Yes, I will risk indiscretion," continued the Count, "because, if some twenty years ago there had been anyone frank enough to say to me what I am going to say to you now . . . oh, what a lot of good he would have done me, and how grateful I would have been to him for the rest of my life!"

Kalinovich still made no reply.

"I should like to ask you, my dear Yakov Vasilich," resumed the Count, "is the rumour that you are going to marry Mademoiselle Godneva true?"

Kalinovich felt still greater embarrassment.

"The question is certainly not quite discreet, Count," he said.

"And you do not wish to answer me—is that it?" said the Count.

"It's not so much that I do not want to," replied Kalinovich calmly, making an effort to control himself, "as that I am unable to, and it is the fault neither of Mademoiselle Godneva nor myself that there is such a rumour."

The Count looked at him steadily. He saw clearly that Kalinovich was trying to evade his inquiries.

"'The voice of the people,' runs the proverb, 'is the voice of God,'" he said. "There is a grain of truth in all gossip. But that's not the point. Tell me . . . I am determined to have this out with you today and trust that you will not be offended. . . ."

"How can I be offended, Count, since it comes of your good will to me?" said Kalinovich, shrugging his shoulders.

"Exactly, my sincere good will! Tell me this, now—have you any money of your own?"

"Not a penny."

"But perhaps you are threatened by a legacy from some grandmamma or auntie?"

"My only legacy is my brains," replied Kalinovich.

The Count chuckled.

"A very good legacy, you may say," he began, speaking with exaggerated precision. "But absolutely unreliable as a source of income. Mental wares, *mon cher*, are slow to find a market. That which should be exchanged for its weight in diamonds we are often forced to give away for copper alloy. My dear young man," he continued, taking Kalinovich's arm. "Listen, I implore you, to an old fellow who has taken a fancy to you, who acknowledges your brains, your education, your talent! Give ear to a few of my sincerest convictions, purchased by me at the price of bitter experience! When we are young we tend to take marriage very lightly, and yet this is the most important step in our lives, for it is almost the only case in which a mistake is irreparable. One may have behaved frivolously in one's youth, spent five or six years in idle folly. But one only needs to pull oneself together and work for a year or two, and all is well again. Say one has ruined oneself at cards, spent one's substance in some love-affair—never mind, for a single man, a bachelor, financial wounds are not fatal! If the post one has chosen turns out unsuitable, one can resign. If, on the contrary, one loses an advantageous post, one only has to look about for a better one—in a word, almost all errors, follies, actions can be repaired, but the heavy yoke of matrimony can never be shaken off."

"That sentiment is not very new, Count," remarked Kalinovich.

"It is extremely old, if you like," agreed the Count, "but unfortunately many people forget it, and what astonishes me more than anything else is that fools, as if governed by some instinct, are apt to behave a great

deal more rationally than the clever ones, who often make the most reckless, the most ruinous matches. I myself have two sons," continued the Count, warming up to the subject, "and while they are not exactly beggars, they are by no means rich. And this is my paternal maxim for them: marry a rich girl and marry her for love, this moment if you like, for, though they are still only corporals, this is a kind of step forward in life. Or marry a rich girl without loving her, if you like. But marry a poor girl, and for love—never! I shall use all my parental authority to prevent such a thing."

Kalinovich smiled.

"Your maxim, Count, is unjust, if only because it is one-sided. You regard marriage from a purely economic point of view."

"And how else would you have me regard it?" asked the Count fervidly. "Surely, my dear Sir, you would not require me to take into consideration this profound, mad love of yours? *Mon cher, mon cher!* You're a clever man, can it be that you do not understand what this love of all you young people amounts to? It is nothing more than a mask for sexual desires, nothing more than aroused and thwarted sensuality. Believe me, marriage is the grave of this sort of love. Husband and wife are bound by a more solid feeling—friendship—which, I give you my word, is a great deal more likely to arise between people who marry in cold blood than between passionate lovers, for the former at least do not fall, a month after the wedding, from heaven to earth. . . . Love! I can hardly bear to hear this rubbish, this phantom, born of heated imaginations, this feeling which is bred and nourished on obstacles alone, spoken of as the foundation of such an important affair as marriage. If, begging your pardon, you had a mistress with whom you had spent twenty years of your life, and, on the verge of old age decided: 'I will marry her, because I love her,' I should

say nothing, I should find not a single objection! But how are you going to make me believe in the profundity and unchangeableness of the love of some young man of twenty-five and a girl of seventeen, who, sentimentalizing over a novel, have sworn eternal love for each other?"

"All that may be very true, Count," objected Kalinovich, "but it is extremely sweeping and there are many exceptions. According to your rule very few people would get married."

"On the contrary—very many," interrupted the Count. "I would permit this pleasure to very many indeed. Let them marry and be happy! . . . People fall into two categories, my friend—the ordinary, menial workers, whom God himself has caused to be born in order that they may develop and harness themselves with dull patience to some narrow activity—I would even advise such youths to marry. They will propagate hundreds of ordinary human beings and, with the help of benefactors, patrons, bribes, will feed and bring up these hundreds. Therein lies their main usefulness for society, which requires, for its own economic purposes, menial workers in all classes. But there is, *mon cher*, another category, and a much higher one, made up of, let us call them, the cream of society. They are not necessarily all geniuses, but they are nevertheless persons marked out by some particular talent, persons, that is to say, who are destined to be the motive power of society, and not mere patient drones. If I place you in this category, it is your own fault, for you have come a long way out of your original sphere. You are not a school inspector any more, but an author, consequently a man called to a most important and spacious career. It would be a sin and a shame for you to bind yourself hand and foot at the very outset by a reckless marriage."

"I am glad, Count, that you have at last come to the

definition of an author. It seems to me that this entitles me to dispose of my heart more freely, and not to submit unconditionally to your economic rules."

"*Mon cher!*" exclaimed the Count. "The calling of author, I once more repeat, is just what should make you careful! The calling of author, dear Sir, obliges you, in the most decisive manner for the sake of your future fame, of your potential usefulness to society, either to remain a bachelor or to marry a rich woman. The latter would be the best."

"I look at this quite differently, for I do believe to a certain extent in myself and my powers," declared Kalinovich.

"You look at it with the eyes of your accommodating imagination, and I judge from the standpoint of fifty years of experience. Say you marry the young lady we have just mentioned! She is a good girl, and would probably make an excellent wife, one who would love you and make all your interests her own. But do not forget that you must write, and this at once brings up the question: where are you going to live? Remain here as a school inspector, or move to the capital?"

"You speak as if I were already married, Count," laughed Kalinovich.

"Very well—say you are married already," the Count interrupted him. "Where are you going to live, then? Here, of course—with *your* means. In that case, my congratulations! You have merely, as they say, escaped from the frying-pan of the university into the fire of domesticity. Your literary tendencies are good, you have plenty of ideas, you are well-educated, but in two or three years at the most you will have lost it all, grown lazy, become vulgar in this hole, my dear young man—believe me! And then you will take it into your head to go, let us say, to Moscow or Petersburg for a change and there'll be no way of doing this. All your money will have gone

on births, christenings, wet nurses, dry nurses, on dressing your wife to keep up appearances, on furnishing an apartment with at least pretensions to elegance. Family life is a whirlpool, a bottomless pit for money. I inherited from my father not what you inherited, but a fortune which could have kept me while I was working my way up to the rank of general. I was, finally, the darling of the *beau monde*, had every hope of becoming an adjutant, at the age of thirty would undoubtedly have attained a general's epaulettes, and from this you can judge to what heights I would have risen by now. But I married for love, a girl who, though she was exquisite and seemed to combine in herself all the female virtues, was poor, and I had to leave Petersburg, give up all ideas of an official career, and resign myself to rural servitude for the rest of my life."

"And yet, Count, you became richer, and not poorer, after your marriage," observed Kalinovich.

The Count shook his head.

"Richer, have I?" he said. "And do you know what this has cost me, young man? Do you know that I have had to sacrifice myself, my education which, for the times in which I was born, was no ordinary one, my abilities, which were also exceptional, and, finally, my health, and become an adventurer, a speculator, a trader, in order to support and educate my family in a way worthy of my name? And how many ethical concessions there have been! How much business that ran counter to my conscience! The humiliations! The necessity of flattering people I wished I had never known! And now, when all this would seem to be settled, I feel I am good for nothing. . . . Do not envy me, do not hold me up as an example! If I am trying to warn you, it is because I know from experience the onerous, embittering consequences of such an error."

"I am not spoilt like you, Count," objected Kalino-

vich. "I do not demand so much. It would be enough for me if, on moving to Petersburg, I could find any way of living, however insignificant, so long as it was not utter poverty."

"You will hardly find even such a way of living as that in Petersburg. For a married man to live in Petersburg it would take . . . at the very least, lower than which I cannot conceive of living . . . it would take at least two thousand rubles, and even that would mean the utmost privation, going without a glass or two of wine at dinner, not to mention a carriage, or amusements of any sort. But remember—two thousand, and now we will calculate on the basis of figures. How much did you get for your first, and it must be admitted, excellent novel?"

Kalinovich was overcome with confusion. He was ashamed to admit that he had not yet received a kopek, and was still only able to hope for something.

"I got five hundred rubles," he lied.

"And how many such novels could you write in a year?" continued the Count. "One, perhaps two, not more," he answered himself. "That would be in good years, and there will be bad years, too. I am neither a poet nor a novelist, but I know very well that it is impossible always to be writing prose at the same level. A man puts his whole self into this, his whole heart, and therefore it is an uncertain business. One has to wait for the right mood, for inspiration—to have a vocation. This is no mere learned labour or official occupation, requiring nothing but patience for its daily fulfilment. Hence it follows that from the first there will be a deficit in your budget, and in the meantime it is highly likely that your family will increase every year—and here is a forecast of your life in Petersburg: you will write perhaps a few more novels until you realize that no human strength suffices for perpetual writing, and yet money will become more and more necessary. You will force yourself

to write, write hurriedly, publish, ruin your reputation, and from an author will become a writer of light articles, a translator . . . and then all will be lost—your time, your talent, even your health will have been expended in vain. I mean, of course, if you marry. A bachelor wouldn't be much better off, either. Whatever a man's position in Petersburg he develops a sixth sense—the thirst for money. . . . The temptations! The luxury everywhere! The subtle pleasures! And for all this you will have only one source of income—literature! *Mon cher, mon cher!*" continued the Count, shaking his head and smiting himself on the chest. "Pushkin had a fortune of his own and received a *chervonets* for every verse he wrote. And even he was perpetually in straits for money. And Polevoi thanked me with tears when I lent him five hundred rubles, for at that time he hadn't fifty kopeks in his pocket. There's Russian literature for you! We are still far from the time when reading will have become a universal occupation. Look at all the people you saw at my house yesterday, and tell me how many of them feel the need of books! Not one, with the exception of Chetverikov. I don't believe even our Marshal, who is no fool and very well-off, has ever spent a farthing on buying a book. He reads nothing but *The Northern Bee*, and even that he borrows from me. With such a public, literature will never flourish."

"I know all that very well, Sir, and have never counted upon literature alone. If I move to Petersburg I shall look for a post there," said Kalinovich.

"Very good," replied the Count. "Say you get a post—but what rank do you consider yourself equal to? Certainly no higher than a clerk's. You might be made assistant in some government office, senior clerk at the best. But in this case, farewell to literature! After six or seven hours at a desk, you get home fit for little more than to go to the theatre and laugh at some idiotic comedy, or

creep round to some friend to play preference for kopek points. And if you try to combine the two sorts of work, it will be still worse. You know the proverb about chasing two hares, and catching neither. This, my dear Yakov Vasilich, is what I wished and considered it almost my duty to tell you, and I repeat once more—think seriously about your situation!”

“I am exceedingly grateful to you, Count,” said Kalinovich. “But from your words I can only form the strange conclusion that literature is fated to be my misfortune, and not my success in life.”

“Why? Not a bit of it!” interrupted the Count, and then paused for a few moments. “It’s like this, you see,” he resumed. “Again I must make it a condition that I can speak to you as frankly as I would to my own son.”

“Your sympathy alone, Count, entitles you to speak to me not only frankly, but to tell me the most bitter truths,” replied Kalinovich.

“Ah, but that’s not all!” interrupted the Count. “I may have to mention certain individuals, to say certain things, which both you and I ought to know, and I must be assured that, in the case of our disagreeing, this conversation will remain strictly between ourselves.”

Kalinovich looked at the Count, still unable to guess what he was leading up to.

“I have always been pretty discreet,” he said.

“I’m sure you have,” put in the Count, “and therefore I risk speaking to you with extreme frankness on a somewhat ticklish subject. Just now I said that a poor young man might, or rather I would say, *should* marry a rich woman, a woman with a solid fortune, even if not in love with her.”

The Count drawled out the last words and paused as if waiting for Kalinovich to say something. But the latter remained silent, only gazing steadily and severely at the Count, so that he was compelled to drop his eyes.

The next minute, however, he took Kalinovich by the arm and said with a forced smile:

"You are now received at Shevalova's with the utmost cordiality, you enjoy the utmost consideration, on the part of Paulina at least, and therefore . . . why not pay court to her? Good heavens, what a future for you and your talent then! A thousand souls, good Sir, a property in the best of order, and money, the extent of which nobody has so far discovered. Then go wherever you like—to Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, or go abroad. . . . Write at your leisure, unhampered by any other occupations, in whatever climate you choose and which may be favourable for your inspiration. . . ."

Kalinovich seemed perplexed. His expression became still gloomier. He had never expected such frank speculations on the Count's part, and was silent for some time, as if searching in his mind for a reply.

"Your proposal, Count, is somewhat offensive to me, for it has a distinct flavour of mockery," he said in hollow tones.

"Mockery?" echoed the astonished Count.

"Mockery," repeated Kalinovich, "for, even if I should desire to choose such a path to my future, it would be an intention still less likely to be realized than my hopes in regard to literature, which you have exerted so much skill in demolishing."

"As if this were true!" said the Count. "As if you really thought it, and had never noticed that my proposal has much probability behind it!"

"I have never given a moment's thought to this, and I have noticed nothing," replied Kalinovich coldly.

The Count shook his head.

"Now, now, young man!" he said. "You are too clever and too ingenious not to notice at once how people treat you! If, however, for some important reasons of your own you have not desired to see or to remark this, then we

had better break off our conversation, which can lead to nothing, and can only make me appear an idle prattler."

Saying this, the Count fell silent. Kalinovich offered no objections, and they returned to the house in silence.

VII

The result of their conversation was that the Count, despite all his efforts, could no longer keep up his affectionate and courteous attitude to Kalinovich. A kind of chill, an almost offensive pomposity began to make itself felt beneath his every word. Kalinovich noticed this at once, and the next day at morning tea asked for a conveyance.

"I thought you meant to stay with us a little longer," said the Count, glancing towards his daughter.

"I'm afraid I have to be in town," replied Kalinovich.

"A pity! But we will not venture to keep you! When did you think of leaving?"

"I should like to go today."

"Why today?" asked the Count, but in such a tone that Kalinovich repeated still more insistently:

"I must go today."

The Count rang and ordered the footman who answered the bell to have the carriage and four brought round.

Breakfast proceeded in silence, and when it was over Kalinovich bowed formally to the ladies, saying that he was taking his leave. The Countess nodded graciously to him several times, but her daughter merely bent her beautiful head and immediately turned it away. It would have been impossible at that moment to descry any expression whatever on her face.

Mrs. Nettlebeth made him a curtsy.

"*Adieu, monsieur,*" said Monsieur le Grand, pressing his hand firmly.

In the meanwhile the phaeton awaited him in front of the porch.

Kalinovich went to his room and began packing. The Count came out to see him off. Cordiality and friendliness seemed to have returned to him in the moment of farewell.

"Many, many thanks!" he said, putting his arms round his guest and bestowing a kiss upon him.

Kalinovich did not fail to express his gratitude for his kind and obliging reception.

"And please don't forget," added the Count, squeezing his hand and not letting go of it, "that our recent conversation remains strictly between ourselves."

Kalinovich begged him, for God's sake, not to worry on this account, especially since he would scarcely have the opportunity to spread it abroad, seeing that he would probably be going to Petersburg himself in a month's time.

"So you think of going to Petersburg?" asked the Count innocently, and, without letting go of Kalinovich's hand, went on: "Good luck to you—I wish you success from my heart and should the need arise, do not forget us, your old friends—send us a line now and then. I shall always be glad to help you in any way I can. Perhaps your views, now so impossibly immature, may alter one of these days. Petersburg is a first-rate teacher of this sort of thing. . . . If so, write to me, perhaps we may be able to think of something."

Kalinovich understood very well what the Count was hinting at, and replied that he considered it the greatest favour to be permitted to write to him, still more to be permitted to address him a request, and with this they parted.

My hero left in a grave and sombre mood. He no longer dreamed of the fragrant young Countess or ad-

mired the scenery he was passing through, which, as if to match his thoughts, was enveloped in gloom: clouds converged from all sides and it became as dark as evening. The air grew close. The ravens perched on mounds, with ruffled feathers and open beaks; the swallows flew low over the ground. Not a blade of grass, not a leaf stirred. All was still, as if in suspense, and there were infrequent flashes of lightning and growls of thunder. At last the rain began to fall in infrequent drops, and suddenly from quite near there was a loud explosion, and the rain came pouring down, while a gust of wind blew up, bending the trees and raising eddies of dust. Kalinovich put up the leather hood of the carriage and fell still deeper into meditation. Ever since his arrival in the little town he had gone about in a kind of mist in regard to his own position. At the very beginning, as we have seen, he was met with Nastenka's love. He had become almost unconsciously involved in her violent and reckless passion and then, swayed by a momentary sensuousness, had entered into relations with her which he could now not have broken off without inhumanity and dishonour. Then had come his unexpected literary success, his welcome to the house of the General's widow, the meeting with the Count, the little Countess, his dreams of her—events had succeeded one another so rapidly. But the talk with the Count had sobered him. The latter's counsels, remarks and persuasions had fallen on fertile ground. The seeds of practical principles were abundantly sown in the heart of my hero. All that the Count had said had already vaguely occurred to Kalinovich himself as a sort of foreboding, it had only become clearer and more definite now. Two paths lay before him—in one stood a bride who owned a thousand souls—a *thousand*, mark you!—repeated Kalinovich as if endeavouring to persuade himself of the powerful significance of this figure,

but the next moment he made a face, as if he had just stepped on some vile insect. In the other path, he resumed the argument, were literature with its seductive hopes, an independent life in Petersburg where, whatever the Count might say, there was a broad field for a poor man, who had already gained certain rights, to seek his fortune. Of course the best of all would be to go to Petersburg for good. But what about Nastenka? What was to be done? Surely not marry her now, since this must irrevocably poison his whole future with poverty! Better perform the operation at once than suffer a lifetime. Thus spoke the voice of reason in the young man, but at the same time conscience was like a knife turning in his heart.

When he arrived at the town he could not resist ordering the coachman to drive straight to the Godnevs. Need it be said how glad they were to see him there? The first to catch sight of him was Pelageya Evgrafovna, who, her sleeves rolled up, was washing the dishes in the porch.

"Why, it's Yakov Vasilich!" she cried, tugging at her apron in confusion.

"Ah, our bright star! Where have you sprung from?" exclaimed Pyotr Mikhailich. "Nastenka!" he cried. "Yakov Vasilich has come."

"Ah!" cried she, and came running up.

Kalinovich kissed her hand. Nastenka, pretending she was going to kiss his forehead, implanted a kiss right on his lips.

"Oh, how glad I am thou hast come!" she cried, throwing discretion to the winds.

Pyotr Mikhailich made a good-humoured grimace.

"Oh, oh! So it's come to thou-ing and thee-ing!"

Nastenka flushed slightly.

"Why not? I can say 'thou' to him. We are friends," she said, holding out her hand to Kalinovich.

"Of course we are," he said hastily and kissed her hand again.

The Captain was absent, having gone with Lebedev over twenty miles away to shoot game in a marsh, but Pelageya Evgrafovna came in.

"Will you have tea, or something to eat?" she asked Kalinovich.

"Don't ask, old woman! Give us the one and the other!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I should like something to eat," admitted Kalinovich.

"Come on then! Faster! Look lively!" cried Pyotr Mikhailich. But just as the housekeeper was going, the old man, overjoyed at Kalinovich's arrival, stopped her.

"Wait a minute!..." he cried. "The Count's coachman is here. Mind you give him a bite, and a drink of vodka and beer. And give the horses oats and hay. They get all this for having driven Yakov Vasilich to us."

"I'll feed them. I don't need you to tell me that," answered the housekeeper sarcastically and disappeared, while Nastenka began laying the table. Kalinovich asked her not to take the trouble.

"But if I want to, if it gives me pleasure!" she countered, and when the meal was served she sat beside him and poured out his soup, even changing his plates. Pyotr Mikhailich was not behindhand, either. He went himself to the cellar and, bringing back the best lemon cordials, which he knew Kalinovich liked most of all, sat opposite the young people, and gazed at them in a kind of ecstasy. After a short time Kalinovich found it hard to endure their sincere delight.

"Good heavens! How these people love me, and with what black ingratitude I shall have to reward them!" he thought in anguish, and simply had not the heart to tell them, as he had planned to, of his intention to go

to Petersburg. Finding himself alone with Nastenka after dinner, he put his arms round her and kissed her long and passionately.

"Are you crying?" she asked, feeling a tear from his eye on her cheek.

"No, no!" replied Kalinovich and embraced her again, whispering something in her ear.

"Very well," said Nastenka.

For the rest of the evening he was gloomy. The suppressed suffering in his soul found a vent, as usual with him, in spleen. Pyotr Mikhailich began asking him how he had enjoyed himself at the Count's. Kalinovich made a face.

"The Count is the biggest scoundrel I ever met," he replied.

"A Talleyrand, a Talleyrand!" agreed Pyotr Mikhailich.

"The Countess is an idiot," continued Kalinovich.

"An utter idiot! I noticed it that time," put in Nastenka. "And what about the young Countess? Is she an idiot too?"

Kalinovich was slightly embarrassed.

"Oh, how can you! Such a charming girl—I'm sure she isn't!" protested Pyotr Mikhailich.

"An utter idiot," repeated Nastenka. "She fancies she's a beauty and hasn't the slightest idea how stupid she is."

"It isn't that she's stupid," ventured Kalinovich. "She's simply shallow. By nature she may have something in her, but it has all been spoilt, distorted by Papa's bringing-up."

"Appalling!" Nastenka hastened to agree. "When you read to them I was annoyed for your sake. As if any of them understood what you had written! They all just sat round like magpies."

"What d'you mean, magpies? They enjoyed it, espe-

cially Madame Shevalova's daughter," protested Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Oh yes, Paulina, because she's the cleverest of them all," rejoined Nastenka. "She at least listened attentively, but perhaps it was because she's in love with Yakov Vasilich."

"Very likely," agreed Kalinovich with a sigh.

He went home about midnight. And when all was quiet at the Godnevs', once again a shadow flitted through the back yard of Kalinovich's house, made its way to the river, and disappeared in front of a summer house.... At dawn this shadow flitted back, and all was still.

VIII

A week later Kalinovich applied for a four months' leave without salary, and wrote to the Count of his determination to go to Petersburg, asking him to supply him if possible with letters of introduction. In reply to this he immediately received a letter addressed to the director of a government office with a short note from the Count in which he told Kalinovich that this man would be ready to do anything in his power for him. But when he had thus settled his affairs, Kalinovich could not bring himself to tell the Godnevs about it, and strange to say, the greatest obstacle to this seemed to him the Captain, who had now returned. While ashamed to admit it to himself, he had begun to feel an unconquerable fear of him. He thought there might still be some way of mercifully deceiving Nastenka and Pyotr Mikhailich, but not Flegont Mikhailich. And time was passing. The leave had been granted, and there was no longer the slightest possibility of keeping it a secret. Steeling himself in advance against the tears and reproaches of Nastenka, the astonishment of Pyotr

Mikhailich and the ominous silence of the Captain, all of which he intended to meet with coldness, Kalinovich made up his mind to go to the Godnevs at dinner-time, when he knew they would all be at home. Once there, with a muttered remark on the dampness of the weather, he picked up the decanter on the table and poured himself out a huge glass of vodka, which he gulped down before saying:

"I've just obtained leave."

"Leave?" echoed Pyotr Mikhailich.

"Yes, I'm thinking of going to Petersburg," went on Kalinovich as calmly as he could.

"To Petersburg!" said Nastenka, turning pale.

"To Petersburg," repeated Kalinovich, his voice trembling with emotion. "While I was at the Count's I had a letter from an editor. He offers me a job and asks me to go and see him personally," he added, lying from first to last. Pyotr Mikhailich heard him out with a frown, but it did not last long.

"Why, then, you must go, of course!" he said with a glance of comprehension.

"Will you be away long?" asked Nastenka.

The question was a knife in Kalinovich's heart.

"Three or four months," he replied.

"You must go. You'll never do anything if you stick here," repeated the old man, almost calmed by Kalinovich's last words. "And don't you try and dissuade him, Nastasia Petrovna, three months is not a lifetime!" he added, addressing his daughter.

"I'm not trying to dissuade him. Why shouldn't he go, if it's necessary?" replied Nastenka, though there were tears in her eyes and her hands shook so violently that she could scarcely hold her fork.

Kalinovich breathed freely.

"I never expected it would be so easy," he said to himself, and, desirous of making quite an ordinary mat-

ter of his departure, tried to be gay, but could not. The victims of his selfishness faced him at the table, torturing him, and unconsciously exposing his baseness. He could not help glancing at Flegont Mikhailich, trying to guess what was on his mind, but the Captain maintained a stubborn silence. Pyotr Mikhailich, glancing at his daughter, who was as pale as death, seemed also to be lost in thought. He went into his study for his usual after-dinner rest, but they could hear that he did not go to sleep. At first he fidgeted about, coughed, and finally tapped on the wall, which was always a sign that he wanted to see Pelageya Evgrafovna. The latter entered and a whispered conversation began between them, in which the voice of Pyotr Mikhailich was heard the most, the housekeeper replying with her: "Eh, eh, eh . . . hey, hey, hey."

All this time Nastenka, Kalinovich and the Captain who had remained in the drawing-room sat silent and thoughtful.

"Let's go out, I should like to have a little walk," said Nastenka at last, rising and turning to Kalinovich.

He looked at her.

"It's cold today. You might get a cold—where's the pleasure in that?" he objected.

"It doesn't matter. I'm warmly dressed," she said and put on her hat.

Kalinovich did not budge.

"Will you come with us?" he asked the Captain, obviously not wishing to be alone with Nastenka at the moment.

"No, no!" replied the Captain abruptly and picking up his cap he went out, forgetting his pipe and tobacco pouch. Dianka, too, got up and stood between him and the door, in the hope of a little attention. But the Captain kicked her in the side so violently that she leapt

away, squealing and tucking in her tail, and hid under a chair.

"Always underfoot—howl a little more and I'll throttle you, you rascal!" said Flegont Mikhailich as he went out, and his eyes showed that he would have been capable at that moment of throttling his favourite, who, as if she understood this, only ventured some time after to come out from under the chair and, opening the door with her muzzle, run after her master, and follow him at a respectful distance, as he made off, not in the direction of his home.

Kalinovich saw all this and found it highly suspicious.

"Where has that bear gone?" he wondered, following Nastenka mechanically. She too seemed agitated. She walked rapidly; her eyes and cheeks burned. They soon passed out of the main street, and into a side-street, till at last they found themselves in open country.

"Where are we going?" asked Kalinovich at last, raising his head and looking round him.

"To my mother's grave. I haven't been there for a long time and I want you to come and pay your respects to her," she replied.

Kalinovich shuddered.

"Worse and worse!" he thought to himself, and regarded the cemetery ahead of them with a feeling of involuntary disgust. The church in the middle of it was wooden, with narrow windows, over the panes of which, yellow with age, was a rainbow-hued film. The small, squat belfry had settled down on one side. The church, including the roof, which was overgrown with grass and moss, was faced with elaborately carved boards. The cemetery was thickly studded with mounds, on which stood crosses, some black, some white. The simplicity was only disturbed by a marble column with a gilt cross on it and a gilt inscription twinkling in the sun's

rays, erected over the grave of the vodka licence-dealer, recently defunct. Nastenka conducted Kalinovich to her mother's grave, over which lay a rectangular slab of rough stone, with an inscription cut in the upper side: "*Lord, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom, remember me!*" It had been Pyotr Mikhailich himself who had wished these words to be graven over the last home of his wife.

"Let's pray," said Nastenka, kneeling at the tomb. "Kneel thou, also," she added. But Kalinovich stood motionless. There was a veritable hell raging in his soul. He almost desired death for himself at that moment, or for Nastenka to die. But the ordeal was not yet over. After praying and weeping, the poor girl took his hand and placed it on the tombstone.

"Swear to me, Jacques," she began, repressing her tears, "swear to me by the grave of my mother that you will always love me, that I will be your wife, your friend. My mother will never forgive me if you don't. I dreamed of her three nights running—she is suffering on my account."

"Nastenska!... Why this melodramatic scene? Goodness knows it's hard enough as it is!" exclaimed Kalinovich, unable to control himself.

"Swear, Jacques! It will be my only consolation after you have gone," said Nastenka insistently.

"I swear," he said.

At that moment a black mass hurtled noisily from out of the thick grass and flew up into the air. Kalinovich turned pale and stepped back involuntarily. Nastenka remained calm.

"What are you afraid of? It's only a crow," she said.

"Such scenes are enough to ruin anyone's nerves," said Kalinovich.

"What are you angry about?"

"I'm not angry."

"Yes, you are. You're always angry now. You were never like that before," sighed Nastenka. "Give me your arm," she continued.

Kalinovich complied. As they neared the town he said: "This won't do here," and tried to release his arm, but Nastenka would not let go of it.

"Never mind! Let's go on! Let everyone see! I want them to!" she said.

Kalinovich shrugged his shoulders and for the rest of the way he gave himself up to profound meditation. He was haunted by the thought of the Captain, where he was, what he was doing, and intended to do.

As a matter of fact, the Captain harboured thoughts which augured no good for Kalinovich. On leaving his brother he went straight to Lebedev the mathematician, who lived in the Soldatsky District, where no gentlefolk lived, not because he was miserly, but owing to a misfortune which had overtaken him during his very first days of service: though accustomed to deny himself the slightest indulgence he had once taken a hand at cards at the house of the superintendent of police and won a small sum; this had pleased him, and from that moment cards had become for him an almost insatiable passion. He would go anywhere so long as cards were played. He would play with townspeople, he even joined footmen in their primitive games—and it was not greed which ruled him, it was the gambler's passion which moved his manly heart. After carrying on this way for about a year, he at last encountered the landowner Prokhorov, already known to us, who, besides being very clever with a gun, handled cards still more skilfully, and to play against him was equivalent to meeting a bear unarmed—he was sure to get the better of you. This individual won five hundred silver rubles from Lebedev in the space of a few hours. The hunter-mathematician turned pale and began humbly to beg

his opponent to let him go on playing on credit. Prokhorov agreed and by the morning won five thousand rubles from him in bank-notes.

"Enough," said the mathematician at last, puffing like a steam-engine, and he repaired immediately to a broker for a bill of exchange.

Henceforward he began giving away two-thirds of his salary in payment of his debt, moving for this purpose into what was little more than a hovel and living on bread, potatoes and sauerkraut. Even when he went to other people's houses and was offered tea or a pipe of tobacco, he would reply in his bass voice, "No, thanks, I don't take it at home, why should I coddle myself?" He did not even eat the game he shot, but tried to sell it at the highest possible price, forever saving up his money for his creditor.

"Why should you pay? He undoubtedly swindled you," his friends would argue, but Lebedev only answered with stoical firmness, "I know nothing about that. I lost and I must pay."

The day the Captain went to see him he had spent the whole morning preparing potato-meal, grinding about a bushel by hand. He then dined off cabbage soup with sour cream and four or five pounds of black bread and lay down on his wretched little sofa for a nap. His tightly-fitting print dressing-gown left exposed a Herculean chest as hairy as Esau's, and his immense calf-skin boots stuck out from beneath its hem. Finding his host asleep, the tactful Flegont Mikhailich would have gone home another time, but now he waked him up—it took several powerful nudges to arouse the hunter from his giant's slumber. At last he stirred, sat up, opened his bloodshot eyes, rubbed them and, recognizing his friend, exclaimed:

"Ah, Your Honour!"

"Excuse me for waking you," said the Captain.

Despite their close friendship, he always used the formal "you" in speaking to Lebedev or anyone else, and Lebedev replied in the same manner.

"It doesn't matter. I suppose you need a light," he said, finally waking up and smoothing back his bristly hair which stood out all round his head.

"No, thank you, I didn't bring my pipe," said the Captain, clutching at the button from which his pouch usually hung.

"Well, sit down, anyhow," said the mathematician, pushing an extremely heavy chair towards his guest with one hand, while with the other he reached for a wooden mug of *kvass* standing on the window-sill and swallowed the contents at a gulp.

The Captain sat down.

"Well," said Lebedev. "You and I missed the Krusakovsky marsh. Last Sunday the whole Treasury was there. They've probably frightened away the very crows, while you—"

"I had no time," said the Captain, reddening, a sure sign that he was not speaking the truth.

"No time? What the devil do you find to do?" rejoined the hunter, yawning and stretching, looking like a lion in a cage in his hovel.

The Captain made no reply to this remark, only shifting uneasily and asking:

"Is your inspector going to Petersburg?"

Lebedev seemed to see no special significance in the question.

"Of course! He's obtained four months' leave," he replied.

The friends sat silent for some moments.

"He's going to Petersburg—perhaps he'll never come back again," said the Captain in questioning tones.

"Devil take him! Let him go where he likes!" said Lebedev.

The Captain again shifted uneasily.

"Take my brother's house, now! Why, he was received there like a son!" he began, but his voice broke off.

"No doubt about that. He was," confirmed Lebedev.

"And my brother, you know," continued the Captain, "my brother is not a bachelor, he has a daughter, a young girl."

"He has," agreed Lebedev.

"And this place," the Captain resumed, "it's not a forest, it's a town, after all. There's no shutting everybody's mouth. . . . People say what they like."

Lebedev coughed significantly or rather he barked, at last realizing what the Captain was leading up to.

"There's a lot of talk," he said, shaking his head significantly.

"You can't prevent people talking," said the Captain.

"People talk a lot. A lot—of course it's nothing to do with me, I know nothing, but, respecting as I do Pyotr Mikhailich for his kind heart, it's a pity, by God it is!"

The Captain fixed his gaze on his friend.

"You're only an onlooker," he said, in a breaking voice, "and even you think it's a pity. And what about me, when my brother is a father to me? And Nastasia Petrovna is not just a stranger, but my own niece. What ought I to do now?"

The Captain paused, as if waiting for his friend to answer. But the latter merely ruffled the hair on his enormous head.

"If I were to say anything against him—would they listen to me? One of his words is probably better than ten of mine," he concluded, and Lebedev noticed that the Captain turned aside and wiped a tear from his cheek.

"He's a scoundrel, that's what you must say," said the hunter.

The Captain rose and began to pace up and down the hut.

"And now what?" he said, flinging out his arms. "As an honourable man I ought to call him out, the way the officers do."

Lebedev again coughed meaningly.

"Well," continued the Captain. "May my God and my tsar witness that I have no fear for myself! I could kill him this moment, but my brother and Nastenka would never get over it. He's wormed himself into their affections. It's not mere words to say that they received him from the first like a son of the house. They have warmed a serpent in their bosom."

"The scoundrel!" repeated Lebedev.

"Now if I were to come to you and say: where am I to find advice and instructions how to behave ..." said the Captain, blinking away his tears.

"Wait a minute, stop!" exclaimed the hunter solemnly, ruffling his hair violently. "Stop! Listen to me! In the first place, don't cry!"

The Captain wiped his eyes hastily.

"In the second place go to his house and say straight out: 'It's like this—this is what they're saying in the town.' It's the truth I'm telling you, I heard it with my own ears. ... That she was pregnant, and abandoned her child, or something of the sort."

The Captain's face burned, his eyes were bloodshot, his lips and cheeks twitched.

"Well then," continued Lebedev, banging on the table with his fist, "say to him: 'You must atone for your sin, and if you don't, then I summon you in our way, the military way, to the barrier.' He'll funk it, I tell you, he'll funk it!"

The Captain pondered.

"I'll go and see him," he brought out at last.

"Do! It's the right thing," said Lebedev.

"I will," declared the Captain and, not wishing to go to his brother's house for fear of meeting his enemy before they had had their quarrel out, he spent the evening with Lebedev. The latter showed him his favourite gun, forcing him to look into the barrel and exclaiming: "See how the damned thing works!" and the Captain looked, but neither saw nor understood anything.

It would be hard to say what reply my hero might have given to the Captain's challenge, if fate had not come to his aid without any effort on his own part. Nastenka, on returning from the cemetery, led Kalinovich almost by force into her room. He snatched up the first book his eyes fell on and began reading it attentively, and a short time passed in silence.

"Now listen to me, my dear, put the book down," said Nastenka, going up to him. "Listen!" she repeated in somewhat agitated tones. "You're going away now. Well, go. It is what you need. But first you must propose to me, so that I can call myself your fiancée."

A cold sweat broke out on Kalinovich's forehead. "It's not turning out so easy as it seemed at first," he thought.

"Why should I? It seems to me it's all the same whether I propose or not," he said.

"All the same?! How strangely you reason."

"Every bit the same," repeated Kalinovich.

"And if it sets my father's mind at rest? He conceals it, but he worries about us terribly. When you went to the Count's he sat thinking, not saying a word, for hours. Have you ever known him behave like that before? And, finally, take pity on me, Jacques! The whole town now calls me an immoral girl, and if you proposed, I should at least be your fiancée. Whatever they say I shall marry you."

What could Kalinovich find to say to this? And yet Nastenka's words forced him into one more dishonourable act.

"After all," he said to himself, "since I must deceive, I must as well do it properly." Aloud, he said:

"If I really arouse such terrible suspicions in Pyotr Mikhailich and if you wish it, and value so highly public opinion here, I am ready to fulfil this empty formality."

The tone of his reply wounded Nastenka.

"You seem not to wish it, but to be making a concession," she said, flushing.

Kalinovich rejoiced. He had seldom desired anything so much as he desired at this moment that Nastenka would, as usual, lose control of herself, and tell him in a fit of rage that after this she would be neither his fiancée nor his wife. But Nastenka's sense of injury did not last more than a minute—she had asked him to propose to her quite simply and naturally, never suspecting that this might be onerous or disagreeable to the man who loved her.

"You must speak to my father today, or he will worry about your leaving," she said, adding innocently: "My uncle has been speaking to him, you know."

"Good," replied Kalinovich laconically, thinking to himself: "This wretched girl seems to be employing all means to put as many difficulties as she can in the way of my going to Petersburg—can't she see that I am unable to marry her? And if she does see this, but wishes to get me by force, can't she understand the impossibility of this with a character like mine?"

The sound of Pyotr Mikhailich coughing and talking in the next room interrupted his meditations.

"Papa is awake. Go and tell him," said Nastenka.

Kalinovich raised no objection and rose obediently. By now his situation seemed to him ridiculous, but he made

up his mind to submit unconditionally. Pyotr Mikhailich really was up, sitting in his arm-chair as if plunged in profound thought.

Kalinovich took a seat opposite him. The old man gazed long at him, never lowering his eyes, as if he wished to look his fill.

"So you are going far away, and leaving us for a long time, Yakov Vasilich," he said, with a mournful smile. In addition to his fears for Nastenka, he regretted the parting with Kalinovich, to whom he had become attached.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich and added, after a pause, "before leaving I should like to have a talk with you about a most serious matter."

"What is it?" asked Pyotr Mikhailich hastily.

"From the moment of my arrival I have been received in your house like a member of the family," began Kalinovich.

Pyotr Mikhailich bowed his head. All the muscles of his face twitched. Tears came into his eyes.

"I accepted your hospitality, of course, not without an ulterior aim," went on Kalinovich.

"Yes, yes!" said the old man.

"I am attached to Nastasia Petrovna."

"Yes, yes!" repeated Pyotr Mikhailich.

"I am now going away, and I ask for her hand, I wish her to be my fiancée," concluded Kalinovich with an obvious effort.

"Yes, yes, of course!" muttered the old man, breaking into tears. "Yakov Vasilich, my dear boy, as if I hadn't noticed! God bless you!" he exclaimed, extending his hands towards Kalinovich. "Nastenka loves you, you love her—God bless you!"

Kalinovich embraced him.

"Hi, there, somebody! Pelageya Evgrafovna," called out Pyotr Mikhailich.

Pelageya Evgrafovna entered. "Go and call Nastya—Yakov Vasilich has proposed for her hand."

On hearing this news the housekeeper flushed with pleasure and made as if to leave the room. But Nastenka had already come.

"Nastasia Petrovna," began Pyotr Mikhailich, wiping away his tears and assuming a somewhat formal tone. "Yakov Vasilich has done you the honour of asking for your hand. Do you accept this proposal?"

"I do, Papa," replied Nastenka.

"Then may the Lord bless you, for I have long consented!" continued Pyotr Mikhailich. "Now it wants only the Captain. He will be delighted. Hi, Pelageya Evgrafovna! Pelageya Evgrafovna!"

"Don't shout! I'm here!" she called back.

"How can one help shouting at you wenches! You're a wench!" jested the old man, trembling with joy. "Go, my dear, send someone as quick as possible for the Captain. Tell him to come this moment. Look alive, now!"

"Whom can I send? I'll go myself," said the housekeeper. And off she went, but did not find the Captain at home, and nobody in the house knew where he had gone.

"What's to be done? How annoying!" said Pyotr Mikhailich.

Kalinovich offered to go himself for the Captain, but Nastenka dissuaded him.

"Where could you find him? He'll be here soon," she said.

But the Captain did not come. The rest of the evening passed in a manner not particularly gay for the engaged couple, but Pyotr Mikhailich was in a state of ecstasy. Leaving the young people to themselves he paced solemnly up and down the floor of the ball-room, and seemed at first to be making certain calculations,

which all ended in the phrase held up as an example of rhetorical speech:

"'This is he who, soaring high like the king of birds, flew over the summit of Helicon.' Oh, dear, what nonsense I am talking!"

His joyous feelings gave rise to a farrago in the good old man's head no more sensible than the words which, God knows why, he had suddenly remembered.

On returning home Kalinovich found the Captain in his outer room. He had almost expected this and therefore, keeping himself well in hand, he declared more or less imperturbably:

"Ah, Flegont Mikhailich, good evening! Glad to see you!"

The Captain said nothing.

"Won't you sit down?" added Kalinovich, pointing to a chair.

The Captain sat down, without a word. Kalinovich took a seat not far away.

"Where have you been?" he asked in friendly accents.

"With friends," replied the Captain.

"A pity, for today has been a memorable one for us all. I have proposed to Nastasia Petrovna, and received her consent."

The Captain's eyes fairly popped out of their sockets.

"And you received her consent?" he repeated, scarcely knowing what he was saying.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich. "They went to look for you but couldn't find you."

Red and white spots appeared in succession on the Captain's face.

"So you're not going to Petersburg?" he asked, almost breathless.

At this question Kalinovich reddened, but he replied as indifferently as he could:

"Oh, yes, I shall go to Petersburg for two or three

months. It can't be helped. It's too bad, but it is essential for my literary affairs."

The Captain stared blankly but steadily into his face.

"At least now I shall go as an engaged man," continued Kalinovich, "and I trust in this way to shut the mouths of the gossips here and put at ease the minds of those near to Nastasia Petrovna."

The Captain seemed to be embarrassed.

"I have never concealed the fact that I love Nastasia Petrovna," proceeded Kalinovich, "there has been no reason to do so, for my intentions have always been honest, though perhaps the Captain has not always understood this."

The Captain was utterly crushed. Tears ran down his cheeks.

"I am so glad!" he said, holding out his hand, which Kalinovich pressed eagerly.

After this there followed a somewhat long-drawn-out scene in dumb show, during which the Captain, after once more holding out his hand and repeating: "I'm so glad!" rose, bowing and scraping. Kalinovich saw him to the door and, returning to his bedroom, threw himself on the bed, clutching his head and exclaiming: "Good heavens, must one lie and commit base acts at every step in life?"

IX

The nearer the time for his departure came, the more miserable Kalinovich felt, and (since we only learn the value of those who truly love us when we are going to lose them) his affection for Nastenka seemed to be increasing every hour, quite apart from the fact that the voice of conscience was not to be stifled in him by any amount of rational conclusions. Never had she seemed so charming and the very thought of abandoning her,

and that, perhaps, for ever, made his heart beat faster. But he concealed all these feelings, and was outwardly still colder and gloomier. He felt that if Nastenka were only once to break down and weep and display her grief, all his resolutions would fail him. But she did not weep: understanding with the instinct of love how hard it was for her dear one to part with her, she made up her mind not to torture him any more, and tried to be calm. But she could not put her hand to any work, and sat for hours with her arms folded, her gaze fixed on some particular object. But Pelageya Evgrafovna fussed about incessantly and cheerfully, washing and ironing all Kalinovich's clothes with her own hands, making over his feather mattress, quilting him a new blanket, and even sewing him a bag for his soap and a face towel. She thought about food for the journey two days in advance, and sent Grater to her friend Spiridonovna, a townswoman, to buy chickens for making *foie gras*. But Grater did not go so far, and brought back such sorry-looking birds that she could not refrain from throwing a live cockerel at his face. Pyotr Mikhailich, accompanied by the Captain, exhausted himself in looking for a coachman.

"You can't imagine what rogues Russians are!" he said. "I went to that scoundrel, one-thumbed Afonka. 'How much to Moscow?' 'Fifty silver rubles!' 'What, you swindler! Fifty silver rubles? You took me and my wife for twenty-five rubles in notes, in the year twenty-four.' He only laughed. 'We used to get a quartern of oats for ten kopeks then,' he said. 'And the *tarantass* wasn't thrown in.' 'All right,' I say. 'How much do you add for the *tarantass*?' 'Ten rubles.' 'All right,' I say. 'Take ten rubles for the *tarantass*, and we'll hire horses.' 'I shouldn't like to let the job out of my hands,' says he. 'There you are then!' says I, and decided to go to Nikita Sapozhnikov. Nothing doing! That grey mare,

the wife of that rogue Afonka, had got there first, through the back gardens. When I got there—not a kopek less! What d'you think of that? There's Russians for you! A German would never do that—never!”

“Give them what they ask,” said Kalinovich who suffered still more when he saw the trouble they were taking for him.

“No, Sir!” declared Pyotr Mikhailich eagerly, as if it were a matter of losing half his own income. “Be so good, brother,” he said to the Captain, and sent him to a certain Dmitry Grigorich Khlestanov who had told him of a merchant going to Moscow. The Captain went with pleasure and actually found the merchant, who undertook to make the journey a great deal cheaper, much to the relief of Pyotr Mikhailich.

On the eve of his departure Kalinovich moved to the Godnevs, where he was to spend the night. In the evening Nastenka for the first time, taking advantage of a fiancée's right, sat next to him, her head on his shoulder, holding his hand. Kalinovich could no longer keep up his role.

“Listen,” he said, drawing her toward him and kissing her, “let's sit up tonight. Come to my room.”

“All right—when? After everyone has gone to sleep?”

“Yes, I want to be with you.”

“I do, too,” replied Nastenka. “It's the last time.” And her voice was so melancholy that Kalinovich felt a pang.

“Good heavens, and I am abandoning this gentle creature!” he thought, and he got up and left the room as soon as he could.

In consideration of the early rising the next morning all dispersed immediately after supper. Kalinovich was given a bed in the ball-room. As soon as he was alone he blew out his candle and lay down, only to be immediately overcome with an agony of impatience. He

strained his ears to listen to every sound coming from the adjacent rooms. Half an hour passed, but Pyotr Mikhailich was still clearing his throat and coughing, and the irritating steps of Pelageya Evgrafovna could still be heard in the passage. At last the strip of light thrown on the meadow from the window of the study, where the old man slept, disappeared, and the only sound in the deep silence was the regular ticking of the grandfather clock. Suddenly a muffled sound was heard. Kalinovich leaped up and peeped into the drawing-room, through which Nastenka would have to pass on her way to him. But all was empty and dark there, so that he felt a little uneasy and went back to bed. His veins throbbed and every nerve seemed to be feeling and listening. Again there was a knock. It was only a rat gnawing at a bone. "Isn't she coming?" he thought anxiously, worn out by the suspense. Again there was a rustling. "Are you here?" came in a whisper. Kalinovich started, and there was Nastenka with her hair down, in a white nightgown, bending over him in the semi-darkness. All else was forgotten—the terrible parting awaiting her, his ambitions, the inhumanity meditated by him—and bliss seemed to be an infinite thing. But time passed and the dawn began to break. Objects stood out with increasing clearness. Sounds of activity came from outside—the cook was turning the cow out of the yard in response to the shepherd's horn. Grater, chased off the stove-ledge by Pelageya Evgrafovna, was driving out with the water-barrel.

"Good-bye," said Nastenka at last.

"Good-bye," said Kalinovich.

With one last faint kiss they parted, each to fall asleep, forgetful of the coming parting. When, a short time later, Pyotr Mikhailich asked Pelageya Evgrafovna, "What—are they still asleep?" she told him they were.

"Heedless souls!" said the old man, and, unable to restrain himself, went and waked Kalinovich. Nastenka rose too, and came into the room, pale, her eyes heavy and languid. When she greeted Kalinovich she blushed slightly.

The last trying moments of preparation dragged on, as they usually do, till long after midday. First the *tarantass* was taken out, then the horses were brought, and at last Afonka the One-Thumbed himself, in a sheepskin jacket, stained with tar and the fine dust of oats, harnessed them with leisurely movements and then, leaning against a shaft, looked on passively as Grater, under the supervision of the Captain, dragged out the luggage and loaded the carriage. Pyotr Mikhailich took advantage of this breathing space to beckon Kalinovich with a nod into his study.

"I have a request to make to you, Yakov Vasilich," he began in somewhat uncertain tones. "Look, these are my poetic sins," and he drew from a chiffonier a thick notebook. "There are elegies, some short odes, of an—er—erotic nature, you know. Couldn't you manage to get some of this rubbish printed in some little journal or other? It would be a great consolation to me in my old age."

Kalinovich smiled inwardly on hearing this innocent desire.

"Why not? With the greatest of pleasure," he said.

"Be so kind," said the old man. "But don't tell Nastenka. She would only laugh at me," he whispered as they went out of the room.

In the ball-room they found Kalinovich's landlady who, little as she liked her lodger, nevertheless considered it her duty to see him off. Kalinovich's fellow-traveller, the merchant, was there, too, evidently exceedingly warm in his neatly-belted sheepskin coat. Pelageya Evgrafovna had provided breakfast enough for a

large company, but neither Kalinovich nor the others could eat, with the exception of his landlady, who tossed off three glasses of vodka, devoured two huge chunks of pie, saying, "How good it is!" and cast glances at the pickled fish, which seemed to imply that if she had not been ashamed she could have gobbled it all up, too.

"Have something," Pyotr Mikhailich said politely to the merchant.

"Thanking you humbly, but I have eaten my fill," replied that gentleman, who reeked of onion.

"Then we'll all sit down," continued Pyotr Mikhailich, and tears welled up in his eyes. They sat down, even Grater, who had been hovering on the threshold, but whom Pelageya Evgrafovna ordered to take a place, too.

"Well!" began Pyotr Mikhailich, rising again. After a pause and again muttering, "Well," he put his arms round Kalinovich and kissed him.

Nastenka, too, embraced him. She did not weep.

"Good-bye, I wish you a happy journey and a quick return!" said the Captain with an odd grimace.

Pelageya Evgrafovna's eyes were red with weeping. Even Grater caught and kissed Kalinovich's hand with some show of feeling, and the landlady, her cheeks flushed with vodka, bestowed three kisses upon him. Then all went out to the porch to see them off.

"God speed!" said the merchant, crossing himself and getting into the carriage. Afonka started the horses. All this time Kalinovich had said never a word, but the expression of his face was one of pure martyrdom. Looking back, he could still see the pale, sad face of Nastenka at the window. At last the Godnevs' house disappeared from view, and then the school where his daily visits had struck such terror to the hearts of his subordinates. The silvery domes of the church seemed to shine in the sunlight more brightly and beautifully

than they had ever shone before. The municipal offices, in the porch of which two watchmen sat tranquilly, were also left behind, and to the right appeared the river with the summer-house on the bank where Kalinovich had first obtained from Nastenka her declaration of love. How happy he had been that evening! And now he was running away from this happiness in search of some other—and what that would be, God alone knew! In the Soldatsky District the postmaster's goat, whose milk he used to drink, was nibbling the grass. Prisoners with shaven heads and pale, exhausted faces could be seen through the barred windows of the lock-up, and then came the cemetery in which, as if on purpose to torture him, the first thing his eyes fell on was the grey slab over the grave of Nastenka's mother. "How familiar all this is, and now—farewell! Shall I ever see it again, or will these two years, these places, and people, disappear forever, like a dream that has passed, leaving behind them in my heart nothing but an imperishable memory?" Intolerable melancholy overcame my hero at these thoughts. Unable to restrain himself any longer, he buried his face in the cushion and wept.



Part Three

I

THE TARANTASS we have come to know so well was two days on the road to Moscow, passing from one posting station to another. All this time Kalinovich scarcely lifted his head from the cushions. The merchant, too, scarcely spoke, gazing ahead with a kind of grim determination, and what he thought about, God alone knows! At Serpovikha, a few stops before Moscow, they were given a woman driver wearing, however, a man's mitts and cap, to prevent her from being too conspicuous on the road. The merchant noticed this and declared:

"It's a disgrace to be driving behind you, wench! It wouldn't matter so much if it were nearer to night-time!"

"Not all deeds are done in the night, Sir. I have driven people like you in the day-time too. You're not the first," countered the woman, and she delivered them safely to the next changing place, where they were greeted by a crowd of drivers.

"There she is, the she-devil, again!" said one, addressing the passengers. "Did she serve you well, gentlemen? If not we'll give it to her!" he added.

"Go and give it your own wenches!" cried the woman, leaping gallantly from the box-seat. "None of you will drive the gentlemen better than I have!"

When fresh horses had been harnessed, a lanky youth with a ring dangling from one ear, in a torn robe, and felt boots, though the roads were deep in mire, clambered into the driver's seat. He had been a serving lad, recently dismissed from the posting station, and he liked to use harness bells for the sake of effect. He treated the horses with the utmost ferocity, tugging at the reins and yelling at them.

"Gee up!" he shouted and lashed at all three horses with his whip. The wheeler dodged.

"Devil! Imp of darkness!" shouted the driver, lashing it incessantly. At last the horse leaped forward. This did not suit the driver either, and he jerked the reins, lashing at the horse continually. The *tarantass*, jolting in and out of the ruts, shook mercilessly. Despite the melancholy thoughts in which he was absorbed Kalinovich began to feel bruised all over.

"What are you driving at such a rate for?" he said.

"I'm the lad for driving fast!" was the reply, and yelling: "You miserable hacks!" he tugged so violently at the left-side horse that it tossed its head in pain.

"Slower, I tell you!" cried Kalinovich.

"Never you mind! Just hang on, I won't spill you out," replied the driver and, abusing the horses roundly, drove them on relentlessly. The merchant, for all his bulk, felt the shaking, too, but apparently did not care, and actually seemed to enjoy it.

"All their horses are lame, you see. If he didn't tickle them up at the start they'd stop half-way," he explained to Kalinovich.

"No fear! Not with me! I have a fever today, and it makes me still worse," he told them, turning and displaying his yellow face and the yellow whites of his eyes.

The pace was so rapid that they reached the next posting station in something like two hours. Driving into a village, the coachman turned sharp towards a hut which appeared bigger and more important than the others. Their arrival caused quite a hubbub. A little boy ran off to the end of the street. A woman looked out of the window. A peasant leaning against the gate, apparently a kind of supervisor of the drivers, took off his cap and smiled.

"Whose turn?" asked the driver, getting down.

"The old man's," replied the man.

"Get on with the harnessing, my good man," said the merchant. "There's no reason for lingering here."

"They're ready, master, they're ready!" replied the man, and passed behind the *tarantass*. "All the way to Moscow, it seems?" he added.

"To Moscow," replied the driver.

"Give us a light, Auntie Arina," he said to the woman looking out of the window, and extracting from the front of his shirt a greasy pouch and a short pipe, he filled the bowl with home-grown tobacco.

The woman disappeared and a moment later thrust her hands out of the window, holding a burning coal which she soon flung on the ground, unable to bear the heat.

"Oh, you and your light! I've burned my hands all over," she grumbled.

"Butter fingers! How will you bear it when you get to the other world, and they begin to roast you in hell?" asked the driver, picking up the coal and lighting his pipe.

"They're all in a sweat," said the man, examining the panting horses.

For all reply the driver went up to the left-side horse, which was sweating more than the others, and seized it by the muzzle, growling: "Out of breath, damn you!" trying to make it neigh, after which, never removing his pipe from his mouth, he began unharnessing it.

"Well, my good fellow, will you be ready soon? Or must we wait till tomorrow?" the merchant asked.

"Tomorrow if you like," replied the driver with a half-smile.

"You wouldn't like it if you were paid tomorrow, would you?" said the merchant furiously.

Just then a man with a baby in his arms came up.

"Why should we be paid tomorrow?" he put in. "We must be paid today."

"There you are! You're quite ready to take money!" said the merchant, surveying him severely.

"In a minute, master, in a minute! Don't be in such a hurry!" the supervisor said soothingly, and very soon the old woman brought the collar and the bridle, and a fifteen-year-old boy led up a small grey horse by the forelock, which, it turned out, was to be the wheeler. While harnessing it he tightened the girth with his knee against the horse's side, till his ears reddened, and at last he let go and fell flat on the ground.

"Take care, lad, you'll break the stones!" said the man with the baby, who was still looking on.

The boy flew into a rage.

"Go to the devil! Standing there with your brat!" he

yelled, and spitting on his hands, again took to tightening the girth.

One of the side horses walked up by itself. The driver, as if sorry for it, put pads under the traces, and, slapping the horse on the haunches to make it stretch them, cried: "All right! That'll do!" At a hut some distance away a woman who had carried a horse-collar was quarrelling violently with a man. The other side horse was led up and harnessed by the new driver, a grey-haired, bent old fellow. In the meanwhile the former driver, hoping for a tip, stood bareheaded, addressing himself to the merchant.

"I have no change, my good fellow," replied the latter indifferently.

"He has no change," repeated the driver, scratching the back of his head. "You merchants are a nice lot, you are!" he muttered, walking round the carriage and going up to Kalinovich, who angrily tossed him a ten-kopek piece. The whole scene had begun to sicken him, most of all the merchant with his set, brick-red face and clumsy figure. He felt that nothing this blockhead could feel would ever stand in his way, or prevent him from amassing money. He would no doubt have been ready to throw over ten mistresses for ten rubles, and it would probably have been easier to explain to a post than to him that somebody was bound to suffer in such cases. "How often," Kalinovich told himself, "a simple person would brush aside like a straw what we, with our higher development, our reflexes, would consider a mighty fortress! They say we enjoy refined pleasures! But who in God's name would agree to pay for this refinement by these highly unrefined sufferings now gnawing at my heart?" Goaded by these last thoughts, he cried out angrily, "Quicker, you swine!"

"In a minute, Sir, in a minute!" replied the ancient driver, at last hoisting himself up into the seat. "Hi,

old woman!" he called out. "Come here, give me a sack of oats to sit on, the seat's as hard as iron, although it is a leather one!"

The old woman obeyed.

"Look here, old fellow, you'll never get there alive!" remarked the merchant. "They'd better send a lad."

"Don't you worry! We'll get there by the help of God and his Son."

"You'll see what a good driver he is, the old one," said the man. "Go on, Nunkyl!"

The old man started the horses. The horse which had come of its own accord showed a strong desire to turn into its own yard, which the little boy frustrated by seizing the bridle, thumping the horse's back with his fist and leading it past. Some peasants standing in the middle of the street laughed.

"Go on, go on! Tug its head off!" said the man with the baby, and the rest laughed.

Kalinovich grew angrier than ever.

"Even that amuses them, the fools!" he thought half-enviously.

As they passed out of the village the old man drove the horses at a light trot. Unlike the previous driver he showed himself extremely good-natured, and fell immediately into a sort of monologue: "What a chap—even grudges me the reins! A swindler, say I! I lend you my horse, a living creature, and you won't give me a rope! I shan't hang myself on your bit of twine, you fool! And call yourself a neighbour!" After this the old man remained wrapped in thought for some time, as if meditating on the avarice of his neighbour, and then suddenly turned to his passengers.

"The folk in our village are rascals, worthy Sirs!"

"Rascals, are they?" asked the merchant.

"Rascals, every one of them! It's dog eat dog with them! Me, I'm a quiet chap, I'm no brawler, but I have

no peace with them. Grudging me the reins! Does he think I'll eat them with my porridge? I'll bring them back as good as I took them—the curl!”

While the old man rambled on they came to a cutting in the forest, about twenty-five miles long and extremely sandy. The horses, walking at a foot pace, could hardly drag the heavy *tarantass* over it. The sun was by now quite low, and long shadows were cast by the high dark woods on either side of the road, which stretched out ahead in an endless pattern. Kalinovich, who had been kept awake the whole way by his spiritual tortures, at last began to feel drowsy. But the voice of the driver kept him awake.

“There’s nothing good to be said about our village, Sir travellers,” he said. “You, Sir merchant, you don’t look very young, you may have heard the rumours about our place—what’s the good of trying to conceal them?”

“What are you driving at?” asked the merchant.

“The way they carry on on the highroads, Sir,” replied the old man in a solemn whisper.

The merchant cleared his throat.

“Why, is that still going on?” he asked in significant tones.

“Well, not like it used to be,” explained the old fellow. “Oh no! Not like it used to be. The authorities are getting stricter every year. The district police had the whole village flogged, though why nobody knows.”

“Flogged?” echoed the merchant, in tones of evident enjoyment.

“Flogged,” repeated the driver. “And the mischief goes on just the same. God knows who it is! Some say it’s runaway soldiers, but no one knows.”

Once more the merchant cleared his throat.

“Is there often mischief?”

“Often, Sir. Last haymaking they found a woman with her belly cut open and in the spring they found a

drowned man in the river. The police tried to find out who did it—whether he had been drunk and got into the water himself, or whether someone threw him in. God knows! All sorts of things happen."

Something like a sigh escaped from the merchant.

"They might hold up a carriage, I suppose," he said.

"If there's a bad man about, Sir, he'd hold up a carriage, too. Look at us, now! Here we are driving along the road, and what could we do for ourselves? No fire-arms and everyone frightened. But he's taken up this sort of life and *he's* not frightened, because—one shouldn't mention it at night—the Evil One himself has taken up his abode in him."

The merchant seemed unwilling to continue this sort of talk.

"No use talking about it," he said.

"Talking, Sir!" repeated the driver. "Isn't it said in the prayer to the Lord: 'Save me from the Evil One'? And don't our priests teach us fools: 'As soon as you so much as begin to think of evil, your guardian-angel flies away from you thousands of miles and the Evil One takes up his abode in you, walks with your feet, acts with your hands, and in your heart, as an evil bird, weaves its nest.' That's what they teach me, Sir. 'You must fear the devil,' they say, 'worse than fire and sword, worse than hunger and earthquake, nothing but the word of God can drive him away, and he melts like wax before the Lord's countenance.'"

"True, true," agreed the merchant, "but drive faster. What people are those beside the wood, like men with sticks?" he added.

"Like men with sticks! See how they stride, like giants! Gee up, my hearties! All sorts of people roam about, Sir! Who knows what they have in their minds? God save every man at every hour! Gee up!" said the driver.

Kalinovich recalled his childhood, when he had been afraid of goblins and bad men. "Life, it seems, is still sweet and full of mysterious terrors for these people," he thought, "but I am no longer superstitious, I fear neither devils nor hell, and would be only too glad to fall this moment to the knife of some spark of the highway, to be rid, at last, of these hellish tortures." Thus musing he suddenly fell asleep. In the meantime the little old man was succeeded in the driver's seat by a diminutive lad, who could scarcely be seen in the darkness, and whistled like a bird all the way to the next posting station. This lad's place was taken by a huge driver with an immensely wide back, whose sheepskin jacket stank vilely. Though the grey wheeler gleamed white in the darkness, this driver, too, could scarcely be seen, but he could not be heard, either, and with the dawn another change was made—to three sturdy horses and a Moscow driver, a swaggering fellow, tightly belted, and wearing a beribboned felt hat.

Half-way to the last station Kalinovich woke up. Moscow with its gilded domes was visible against the sky. Smoke rose in straight columns from a thousand chimneys. They were now on a smooth, bustling highway. The horses, chilled from the morning freshness and with steam rising from their sides in great clouds, galloped along at such a rapid pace that the driver could hardly control them. Very soon they overtook a marching battalion. At its head on a black horse rode the commander, his moustache frozen, and after him came the clarinet players in front of the band, playing a march, to which the red-cheeked junior officers and the soldiers, their cheeks blue with cold, kept time, hopping and jumping. A little behind them on creaking wheels followed a train of clumsy wagons loaded with bales of cotton, and drawn by so many horses that it seemed they would never come to an end. My hero regarded this lively scene

with a cold indifferent glance; the only thing that attracted his languid attention was the sight of a middle-aged gentleman, with a cross of St. Vladimir on the breast of his coat, swaying from side to side as he approached them in a post-chaise drawn by three horses. "Perhaps one day I'll be driving in a post-chaise with that same cross on the breast of my coat," thought Kalinovich. And a little later, as they passed through the streets of Moscow, he could not help feeling as if everyone, as well as drivers and passengers, looked at him with a certain respect, as at a Russian author. This feeling, however, was greatly abated when he was forced, from financial considerations, to take a small, dirty room in the Zariadye district. With the sole purpose of showing himself in society of some sort or other he changed hastily and set off for the Pechkin tavern, which he had occasionally visited in his student days and knew to be frequented by actors and certain literary men, who would perhaps greet him as a new confrere. But alas, he found everything quite changed! The furniture and the waiters were different, even the rooms had been changed and, far from being full of actors and literary men, were almost empty. He found no one in the first room, while from the next he caught sight of nothing but a few gloomy individuals playing billiards. He seated himself on a sofa and thought he might as well at least speak about himself to the waiter.

"Do you have any magazines?" he asked.

"Oh yes, Sir!"

"Have you got the July number of—?" And Kalinovich named the magazine in which his story had appeared.

"One minute. . . . I must ask behind the counter," said the man, and came back immediately with an almost new copy.

Kalinovich turned the pages of his story not without agitation, and made a show of reading it, hoping the

waiter would ask him something about his work. But the latter, though he stood at attention beside him, seemed more inclined to expect an order for food or drink.

"It's quite a clean copy, not a bit worn," said Kalinovich, hardly able to repress a rueful smile.

"It's always the way," replied the man. "One number will be almost worn to rags, while another is scarcely opened and stays as good as new. This year three numbers running have hardly ever been asked for by customers."

Kalinovich could only sigh—these three numbers were precisely the ones in which his novel had been printed.

Wounded by the man's innocent explanation, he went into the next room and, much to his delight, there descried a man he knew, though not intimately—a certain Mr. Chirkin who had been a frequenter of the tavern for fifteen years. At the present moment he was eating pork cutlets and washing them down with cabbage soup.

Kalinovich resolved to remind him of his existence.

"Well, well! And how are you?" said Mr. Chirkin, not over-respectfully.

Despite this, Kalinovich sat down beside him.

"Where have you been all this time?" asked Chirkin, as if it were only a month or two since they had met.

"I've been eighteen months in the provinces."

"Have you?" replied Chirkin, evidently not in the least impressed.

"And I have become an author and am now on my way to 'Peter'," added Kalinovich with a smile.

"Fancy that!" said Chirkin, still unimpressed.

Kalinovich sat a few more minutes for the sake of politeness with this ignoramus and then left the tavern. He decided to walk about Moscow and devote himself to reminiscences, both personal and historical. The first place he went to was the university, to stand in front of the old building. He gazed upon the porch in which he had

once awaited with a beating heart the entrance examination, and then went to the new building, glancing up at the side windows where he had listened to lectures on the legal code, and finally recognized the stone post on the kerb, against which, rushing like a madman from his last university examination, he had stumbled and fallen. These things and nothing more came back to him. From the university he proceeded to the Kremlin, taking off his cap as he passed the Spassky Gate, admiring the picturesque Zamoskvorechye and the belfry of Ivan the Great, which seemed to have been newly whitewashed. Beyond it were the high railings and the big bell just as he remembered them, and the Tsar Cannon was still in its old place. All this, alas, interested my hero very little! He went back to his inn with his thoughts in disorder, and his room seemed to him still dirtier, still more revolting. From the adjacent room came the hoarse drunken voices of men and the squeals of women who were no doubt also drunk. The free, roving life of a bachelor which Kalinovich had so longed for, and for which he had torn himself so painfully from a woman who would have bound him to her, now struck him as most disagreeable. For want of a better way of spending the evening he resolved to look up yet another acquaintance, who had a secretarial job God knew where, either in the Duma or the Senate, but who had a home of his own, and a kindly wife, who had always poured out tea herself, and very good tea it had been, and made beet soup and salads, which were also very good. In his student days Kalinovich had dined there every Sunday, without either his hosts or himself quite knowing why he did this. All the time spent by him in this house had passed in listening smilingly to his hostess as she showed him the sash she had embroidered for Father Nicholas and told him of the embroidery she was engaged upon for the Church of the Annunciation. With her

husband Kalinovich had chiefly argued, and always about the same thing. Like our friend, the Captain, his host was very fond of Danilevsky's *History of 1812*, whereas Kalinovich said it wasn't a history at all. And it was these simple folk that my hero now determined to visit, to indulge his literary vanity there at least. He found the house exactly as it had been, except that the paint had faded a little—the same door leading to the porter's lodge, the same little drawing-room. Only the maid who came to meet him was different.

"Is your master at home?" he asked.

"Come in, please, the master's upstairs," she replied, for some reason whispering, and led him very quietly up the familiar staircase. In a room on the right he saw the host himself, seated at a table, clad in a dressing-gown, his face sodden with tears.

"Good heavens! I haven't seen you for ages!" he cried, with a forced smile.

"Are you ill?" Kalinovich asked him.

"I've lost my wife," replied the old man and tears ran down his pendulous fleshy cheeks.

"You don't mean it!" said Kalinovich in a tone of profound commiseration. But secretly he thought: "What the hell made me go to the old fellow?"

"Is it long since you had this misfortune?" he asked aloud.

"Nine days today. Is the dog locked up?" asked the old man in feeble accents, addressing the maid.

"Yes, Sir," she replied in accents as doleful as his own, and added: "The priests have come."

"Good. Get everything ready," replied the widower. "There's going to be a memorial service," he told Kalinovich.

"You don't catch me staying for that!" thought the latter, and rose to go.

"I will not venture to disturb you," he said.

"Thank you, thank you!" replied the host, pressing his hand warmly, his eyes filled with tears.

"Everything and everyone's either dead or dying in this accursed Moscow!" said Kalinovich as he went out of the house. And the next day before ten he was at the railway station, sitting on a bench waiting for the bell to summon him to the train. But in the splendid waiting-room, thronged with an animated crowd walking up and down, absorbed in their own affairs, laughing and talking, his imagination was haunted by a vision of a little house, with a wallpapered drawing-room, in which a mournful man in spectacles and a homespun frock-coat sat, the Captain with his short pipe at the window, gloomy but kindly, and, finally, Nastenka, an expression of despair and grief in her tear-swollen eyes. . . .

"Be so kind as to look after my travelling-bag for me, Sir!" said a woman's voice with a strong foreign accent quite near to him.

Kalinovich blinked. Before him stood a slender young woman wearing a white satin hat and a close-fitting black silk dress with a Turkish shawl thrown over her shoulders. In her small kid-gloved hands she held a huge bundle. Kalinovich hastened to relieve her of it.

"*Où est ce Gabriel?* The wretch!" said the lady, and disappeared.

A few minutes later Kalinovich caught sight of her crossing the waiting-room on the arm of a stout, flabby-faced officer of Hussars, talking eagerly and every now and then smiling and casting sly glances at him. The officer responded with a complacent smile.

The bell rang.

"*Adieu, mon Gabriel!*" cried the lady in a tone of comic woe, holding out her hand to the Hussar.

"*Adieu!*" he replied in a husky voice.

The lady went up to Kalinovich. He rose and took her bundle.

"*Merci bien!*" said she with a sweet smile.

"I see you've found a cavalier already," the Hussar called after her.

"*Oui,*" said the lady, hastening out of the waiting-room.

Kalinovich followed her in silence. Once in the railway carriage she made herself quite at home. Placing the bundle beside her, she put up her very pretty feet on the seat, with a "*Pardon, monsieur, permettez!*" exposing to Kalinovich, who was seated opposite, a pair of daintily stitched boots and even some portion of snow-white stockings. After the train had started Kalinovich took a good look at his companion. He now saw that the expression of her face was absolutely angelic. Her blue eyes were moist and languid, with long lashes. Blue veins showed beneath a tender white skin. Her lips were full and pink, and a perpetual smile hovered over them. Noticing the attentive gaze of her companion, the lady first smiled and then took to alternately dropping her eyelids and looking out of the window. But by the time they had passed through a couple of stations she seemed to weary of this wordless conversation.

"Do you live in Petersburg?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich, not wishing to appear like a country cousin. "And you?" he went on.

"I do, too. It's amusing there."

"Amusing?"

"Why, yes, there are balls ... the masquerade.... I often go to the Italian opera."

On hearing this Kalinovich could not help thinking of Nastenka, doomed to live so far away, and perhaps never to go to a ball or to the theatre. He felt such an excruciating pity for the poor girl that he could only muse in silence.

"How gloomy you are! What's the matter?"

Kalinovich felt an impulse to show off.

"I've lost my fiancée," he replied, glancing at the ring Nastenka had bestowed upon him in parting.

"Oh! You have loved?" drawled out his neighbour. "I have, too," she added, yawning.

Kalinovich looked at her.

"And do you love now?" he asked.

"Now? I don't know. No."

"Who was that man who saw you off?"

"So that's what you think! That was only my brother," replied the lady with a sly laugh. "Do you know Count Khilov in Petersburg?" she added.

"No. Is he your brother too?"

The lady laughed.

"No, no, he's a friend. He's very nice."

"Nice?"

"Oh yes, but that friend of his—ugh! Horrid, fat, red-nosed thing! Ugh! I can't bear him!"

"The Hussar was fat, too."

"Oh, my brother's kind, he's very kind."

"You're a foreigner, of course, but where do you come from?" asked Kalinovich.

"What makes you think so? I'm a Russian."

"No, you're not. You don't speak Russian well. You are either a German or a Pole."

"No, no, I'm a Turk!" said the lady, laughing again.

"If so—if they are all like you, the Turks must be very good-looking," observed Kalinovich.

"Flatterer!" she exclaimed.

"Why d'you call me a flatterer?"

"Because you are a flatterer—do you know Mademoiselle Sara?"

"No—is she pretty?"

"Yes, but she's awfully bad-tempered! Ugh!"

The conversation continued in this strain and Kalinovich grew more and more flirtatious. Here again I am forced to assert a truth which is quite unacceptable in

a novel, the truth that we, the grosser section of the human race, are never so apt to deceive the woman we love as during the early days of our separation from her, even though we love her as much as ever. The fact is that the memory of love is still vivid, the feelings thirst for their accustomed enjoyments, and yet there is a void around us, and the beloved is not there, and we are ready, in an access of self-deception, to substitute for her the first pretty face we come across.

"Do you intend to dine?" asked Kalinovich as they approached Tver.

"Oh yes, I love eating!" replied his companion, and when the train stopped Kalinovich helped her out and gave her his arm as they crossed the platform.

"*Il fait froid!*" she said, cuddling into her shawl.

"Nice little thing!" thought Kalinovich and pressed his elbow tenderly against her forearm.

"Two dinners," he told the waiter, and turning to his companion, added: "*Voulez-vous du vin?*"

"Oh yes, I love—*comment cela dire, boire?*"

"Drinking."

"Oh yes, drinking."

"A bottle of champagne," said Kalinovich to the waiter.

The wine was brought. The cork popped.

"Oh!" cried the lady.

"Were you frightened?"

"Yes, it made such a noise. I was frightened," she replied, and then, putting the tip of her finger on the rim of her glass, over which the wine was foaming, she added: "That'll do! Don't you dare to go any further."

"Very pretty!" thought Kalinovich.

The lady fell with appetite on the rissoles.

Kalinovich, before beginning on the meat course, raised his glass with the words: "*Voire santé, madame.*"

"*Et la vôtre, monsieur,*" she responded, sipping at

her glass, but immediately crying, with a grimace: "How bitter it is!"

"Do you know what it means in Russian when people drink wine and say 'bitter'?"

"No, I don't."

"It means you must kiss."

"Oh, that! Yes, that's very nice."

"Nice?"

"Very nice," she repeated, and when they got back to their carriage she took off her hat and was prettier than ever.

It was beginning to get dark. "A lost soul, but very sweet," said Kalinovich to himself, glancing at his companion, and a desire sprang up within him which, if not, perhaps, entirely disinterested, was nevertheless a worthy one: to touch chords in her which had perhaps long been silent, but which were still sensitive, chords which, he felt sure, exist in the heart of every woman wherever and whatever she was.

"I'm sure you're a Pole. The more I look at you, the more I am certain of it," he said by way of a beginning.

"Oh, but you're mistaken! I told you—I'm a Turk," she said.

"And I tell you you're a Pole, a German Pole," insisted Kalinovich. "You are precisely that charming combination of the German and Slav types. You are very good-looking."

"I am, I am!" she agreed.

"Of course you are," put in Kalinovich. "And perhaps in Warsaw, or still further away, you have a father and mother, a brother and sister, who mourn your fate, if, that is to say, they know that you are still alive."

A distinctly melancholy expression flitted across his companion's pretty features.

"How can you say that? You don't know me," she said, no longer in the same mocking tone.

"That's not all I know about you," continued Kalinovich. "I know you find life sad, very sad, though perhaps you smile and laugh all day. The other day I saw a girl who was thrown over by the man she loved, and because of this was reproached by her relatives and scorned by society, but even she is happier than you, for she has given no one any reason to despise her, morally speaking."

His companion listened. She did not seem to understand his actual words, but she guessed at their meaning, and there was not a trace of gaiety left in her face.

"You don't know me, how can you say such things?" she said again.

"Oh yes, I do!" Kalinovich assured her. "And I tell you that your only salvation would be to be loved by a man who would not only save you from the milieu in which you now find yourself, but would make you detest what now amuses you, and would show you that there is another, a better life for a woman than going to *bals masqués* and the theatre.

This was beyond her comprehension, and when Kalinovich, coming to an end of his homily, caught at the boot she was digging into the cushioned seat, she pulled her foot away, saying:

"What's that for? You mustn't!"

"Why mustn't I? Perhaps I am that man."

"No, no! I don't trust men."

"Why not?"

"They're all so unkind, so deceitful, ugh! No, no!"

"I'm not that sort," said Kalinovich, and again tried to get hold of the little boot, but his companion again wriggled it away.

"No, no, you mustn't do that!" she said.

"Why not?"

"You just mustn't! It's disgraceful! You're impertinent! Everyone is looking."

"And may I in Petersburg?"

"Oh, what a man! Why, I don't know you!"

"And may I when you get to know me?" went on Kalinovich, and, bending over, he suddenly kissed her hand.

"You're a naughty boy, I'm afraid of you!" she said, folding her arms mischievously, and taking her feet off the seat.

This conversation was interrupted by the entrance of new passengers—a fat country squire with his fat wife, who took the empty places next to them as if from sheer spite.

"Excuse me," said the gentleman in a bass voice, and dropped carelessly on to the seat beside the young lady, while his wife, puffing and panting, almost stepped over Kalinovich's knees on her way to a seat at the window. The soldier who saw them off began stacking cushions and bags, and bundles containing crescents of bread and white rolls, on the floor at their feet, so that my young couple were completely cut off from one another. Kalinovich's pretty companion, after grimacing humorously and whispering, "*Adieu!*" leaned her head against the back of the seat, closed her eyes and tried to go to sleep. Kalinovich, infuriated, feeling the fat thighs of the squire's lady next to him instead of the pretty little foot, began to squeeze his new neighbour against the door of the carriage with all his might. But she thrust out her elbows, emitting an odour of warm flesh, and exclaimed: "For goodness' sake, how folks do push here!" My hero could endure no more—it was all he could do not to spit in disgust—and after giving the good lady another shove, he crossed over to the opposite side and soon, lulled by the swaying motion of the train, fell into a light doze.

As everyone knows, the train gets into Petersburg at daybreak. Towards dawn most of the passengers began to fuss and fidget in the usual way. Even Kalinovich could not suppress his excitement. Imitating the other

passengers he wiped clean a place in the blurred window-pane and began looking out of the window. But all he could see was an endless expanse of fields covered with crooked fir saplings. And when trains coming the other way flashed past, even this landscape was not to be seen. Kalinovich thought he would do better to look at his pretty companion, who slept soundly as if between two cliffs—the squire and his lady—and only woke up as the train steamed into the station.

"Here we are!" he said, approaching her, in the playfully tender voice which mothers sometimes use to their children. "Are you awake, my pet?"

"Oh yes, here we are!" she said, with a charming yawn, and pouncing on her bundle, hurried out of the railway carriage.

"Do tell me where you live!" cried Kalinovich, running after her, and speaking in almost imploring tones.

"In Gorokhovaya Street—Bagov's house—ask for Amalchen," she replied hastily and disappeared.

Left to himself Kalinovich hastened to get out his trunk, and flinging it into the first *droschky* he came across he told the driver to take him to a cheap hotel. To save himself trouble the driver went straight to the hotel *Moskva*, where my hero, for a silver ruble, obtained a tiny room on the fourth floor, furnished with a small polished table and a sofa. After unpacking his things he sat down at the window and began looking out with eager curiosity. Carriages rolled to and fro, pedestrians passed up and down, a troop of Cossack horsemen trotted by, some heavy machinery was borne along by at least ten horses. Kalinovich realized that he was now at the very heart of Russia, but when he transferred his glance from the earth to the sky he was quite astonished—never before had he seen such low-hanging clouds, or the sun so low in the heavens. A kind of fog descended upon his mind, he felt like yawning, his eyes closed of

themselves. He lay down on the sofa and fell asleep, sleeping till four o'clock, and when he awoke he felt a racking pain in his head and a kind of chill throughout his body—this was the first welcome extended to him by the tundra of Petersburg. Mastering his feelings, he ordered dinner, drank a glass of vodka and a cup of strong coffee, and set out to see the sights of the town. For this purpose he hired a *droshky*, telling the driver to take him past all the palaces and churches.

"Hey, what bridge is this?" he cried, as the horses trotted over a stone bridge past the house of Beloselsky-Belozersky.

"Anichkov! And that's the Anichkov Palace," the driver informed him.

"Who lives there?"

"Can't say, never heard."

"And what's that church?"

"That's the Kazanskaya."

"The Cathedral?"

"Yes."

"I wonder why they have stuck those enormous wings on to it?" said Kalinovich to himself.

"Those two cast-iron warriors must be firing from pistols," explained the driver as they passed the statues of Barclay de Tolly and Kutuzov. But Kalinovich did not hear him. The multitude of pedestrians and carriages in Morskaya Street made his head go round, and when they reached the square and he saw the Winter Palace he was quite overcome—this huge and beautiful edifice made an enormous impression on him.

"Take me to the river as quick as you can," he said, catching sight of the heaving waves of the Neva in the distance. Alas, it greeted him but shabbily when he arrived at the Dvortsovy Bridge, for such a cold north wind blew up from it that, far from being able to stop

and gaze at it, all he could do was to glance in its direction.

"Ugh, how cold it is, damn it!" he exclaimed, turning up the collar of his overcoat, and when he got as far as the Blagoveshchensky Bridge he paid off the driver and went on foot, bending his steps towards the monument to Peter the Great. He stood gazing at it for a short time, walked round it once or twice, and then turned to look at St. Isaac's. These sights had the most irritating effect on him. Without knowing where he was going he found himself in Voznesensky Prospekt. All round him he could see tiny businesses struggling with all their might to become great shops: he met some Jewish shopkeeper every ten steps or so, and from most of the houses came whiffs of fried onion and pike. A still more unpleasant scene awaited him in Sadovaya Street, where at least a score of workmen were pouring out of a tavern door. Never in his life had Kalinovich seen people so emaciated and hideous. There was something sombre and ferocious in their very drunkenness. One of them fell on to the pavement right in front of the tavern, banging his head violently against a post on the kerb, while another, probably with the idea of preventing him from hurting himself again, dragged him away from the post by his hair, muttering: "That'll do, you devil, stop it, now!" Their companions regarded them gloomily, but otherwise displayed the utmost indifference.

Hastening away from scenes so unpleasant, Kalinovich found himself in the Sennoi Market, but here he was so overcome by the stench coming from carts of sodden, rotting carcasses, that he rushed headlong in the opposite direction, where, if the heaps of stale vegetables on the stalls were not exactly fragrant, at least they did not smell of putrefying meat. These details convinced him that he was now in the poorest part of the town.

Meanwhile dusk was drawing on and by the time he

reached the Nevsky Prospekt it was quite dark. Lamps were lighted here and there, faintly visible carriages rolled by in almost unbroken procession, pedestrians flitted past the lighted shop windows, and amidst all this, from God knows where, came the sound of a barrel organ. Kalinovich involuntarily checked his steps, the music was like the moaning of a human soul, imprisoned in the gloom and frosts of this tomb-like city.

Arrived at his hotel room once again he sank exhausted on the sofa. In Moscow he had been bored—here he was overcome by an incomprehensible, an intolerable grief.

"What's the matter with me?" he wondered. "Have I become so weak that I can only be happy at the side of that girl? No! This is something more than mere love and remorse, it is more like fear for myself, fear of those endless monotonous rows of houses, those wide streets, iron railings and the chill wind blowing from the Neva!"

II

Three days passed. His grief and inexplicable fear did not desert him, and he hardly ever went out. His clothes, which he had been wearing for the last three years, were in such a condition that as well as advertising his appalling poverty, they actually aroused suspicion as to his morals. Knowing how sensitive Petersburg was in this respect he made up his mind to stay in till the suit he had ordered at Scharmer's was ready. At last, on the fourth day, it was delivered by an extremely dapper assistant. Arraying himself in elegant new underclothes, donning the frock-coat and trousers and the smart waistcoat, Kalinovich surveyed himself in the mirror, and felt he was in the literal sense of the word another man. The most experienced eye would never have noticed anything provincial in his appearance. His already thinning

hair, his pale, sallow complexion, his spare graceful figure, his correct manners, all suggested one who had been marched up and down the Nevsky Prospekt in his childhood in the most picturesque apparel, taken to some Monsieur Pierrot for dancing lessons, and finally sent to the university, not so much for educational purposes as to acquire good manners, which, as we well know, had never been taught him, and must have been instilled in him by nature. Kalinovich settled the tailor's bill and set out immediately to pay a visit to the editor's. Considering things in a practical light he felt he could almost count on being received there with the utmost attention and respect. And therefore, after scanning the inscription on the door of the editor's apartment with narrowed eyes, he tugged boldly at the bell-pull. The door was opened by a manservant.

"Say Kalinovich has called," said my hero, naming himself in loud firm tones.

The man went away.

"Kalinovich has called," he announced.

"Who? What Kalinovich?" a voice called out.

"Kalinovich," repeated the man.

"Ask him to come in," the voice replied irritably.

The man went back to Kalinovich.

"Come this way, please," he said.

Kalinovich was disconcerted. Apparently he was being received without there being a very clear idea of his identity. Passing through a doorway he immediately found himself in a huge room, in the middle of which stood a great table on which inkstands, pencils, piles of notebooks, a copy of *The Bulletin of Art* and one of *L'Illustration Française*, were scattered about in picturesque disorder. Compared with this literary altar, the Count's writing-table seemed to Kalinovich a mere school-boy's desk. The walls were lined with shelves crammed with books and newspapers. Some unframed pictures lay

about on the seats of chairs—three landscapes, probably the work of Calame, an engraving of Jordan's *Transfiguration* and a woman's head in oils, extremely sentimentally presented, with languishing rolling eyes. In a word everything was in the most learned and artistic disorder, and seemed to testify that there existed no lack of material for filling up the pages of a magazine when required. Seated in a rather dark corner was the master of all this—a plump florid individual with his head thrown back and hardly any neck at all, who displayed no sign of his commercial talent, unless small restless eyes behind gold-rimmed spectacles were a sign. He was sitting in the corner of a sofa, wrapped in a frock-coat of thick plush. At the other end of the room a fire in an open grate lit up with picturesque effect the figure of a much more attractive person with a look of the country squire about him, who leaned on a stick with an expensive handle, his blue eyes fixed on the ceiling in a kind of sybaritic pensiveness. There was something of breeding about his whole figure, something which seemed to say that he had never had anything but honourable ideas and good food all his life. The same firelight lit up another person, a short young man whose features promised nothing of interest. He was standing at one of the bookcases, feigning absorption in the open newspaper before him, as if unaware that his presence was being completely ignored. Taking in the scene at a single glance Kalinovich went straight up to the master of the house.

"How d'you dol Glad to meet you," said the latter, half-rising. He added immediately: "Mr. Belavin, Mr. Kalinovich."

The guests bowed to one another in silence.

The younger man cast a pained, furtive glance in their direction as if expecting to be introduced too. But this honour did not fall to his lot.

"You're from Moscow, aren't you?" asked the editor, when Kalinovich had seated himself.

"Yes . . . but for the last few years I have been living in the provinces," replied Kalinovich.

"In the provinces?" repeated the editor, fixing his small eyes on Kalinovich.

"Yes, in the provinces," repeated Kalinovich, "and on my arrival here," he added in somewhat formal accents, "I considered it my duty to call and thank you for finding room in your magazine for my little work."

"Oh, not at all! It's our duty," said the editor quickly, and immediately turned his gaze to the carpet and asked, as if desirous of changing the subject: "You came through Moscow, I suppose?"

"Yes, I did."

"By the railway?"

"Yes."

"Well, and is it pleasant?"

"Very pleasant," replied Kalinovich, beginning to feel a certain wonder that his interlocutor could not find a more interesting subject to discuss with him.

The editor, expelling a long stream of cigar smoke, turned with a much more respectful expression to the gentleman he had introduced as Belavin.

"It has now become a most important question," he began, speaking emphatically, "whether the railway will bring about connections between these two towns, and how and in what way this will be done."

Before replying, Belavin closed his eyes, and a mocking smile flitted over his lips.

"I don't think it will make much difference," he declared. "Probably the first result will be that firewood will be still dearer in Moscow, and fruit may become cheaper in Petersburg."

"Come now! That's not all! The rapidity of commercial transactions—and the exchange of ideas. . . ."

"What ideas?" asked Belavin as indifferently as before, again almost closing his eyes.

The editor looked away, finding nothing to say to this.

"How solemnly these two gentlemen discourse on trifles," thought Kalinovich with inward vexation.

"They say one's feet get cold in the train," continued the editor, addressing him.

"I did not notice it," replied Kalinovich abruptly.

"Didn't you?" asked the editor.

"No, I did not," repeated Kalinovich in tones so mocking that the young man busying himself over the newspaper glanced at him in astonishment.

The editor once more exhaled a long stream of smoke and turned to Belavin.

"About this gentleman of whom we were just speaking, say what you will, but he is not solid."

Belavin assumed a grave expression, as if to say he did not agree at all.

"Look here now," continued the editor, warming up to the subject and evidently anxious to convince his hearers, "for over half a century this nation, instead of acting its history in the sight of the world, has been giving as it were historical performances."

Belavin listened.

"The teaching of the encyclopaedists prevails ... the foundations of society, the state and religion have been undermined. ... Bloodshed ... disorder.... What could be foreseen as a result of this? Nothing but the ethical and material demoralization of the nation. And that ought to mean—finis! The end! But nothing of the sort has happened, it renews itself like the phoenix and comes to life again in the person of Napoleon I. It's incredible!"

Belavin continued to listen in silence.

"This gentleman proceeds to conquer Europe, shuffles

the whole German alliance, changes kings, and then in the most idiotic manner finds himself in Moscow with the result that he is later surrendered alive by his adoring countrymen. Then come the Bourbons, the July revolution, the bourgeois king, a fresh protest; the throne crumbles, the device '*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*' is inscribed. And it all ends again in Napoleon III!"

The editor lowered his head as if in helpless astonishment.

Kalinovich was almost ready to agree with him, but, too cautious to show it, glanced ever and anon at Belavin who raised his eyes slightly when the editor stopped speaking, and declared in tones of obvious irony:

"One can't judge a nation like that from afar. To do so would be superficial. One is bound to be mistaken."

"I don't know whether one is bound to be mistaken or not, but these are facts," objected the editor.

Belavin regarded the wall opposite through narrowed eyes.

"Beneath these facts," he began, "there is an extremely solid foundation, and apparent instability is the common lot of any nation which neither confining its social conceptions between study walls, like the Germans, nor forcing them through the channels of parliamentary discussion, like the English, puts them into immediate practice. It's the common lot! We ought to be grateful to them for their altruism in acting as a touchstone for the thought of humanity. I ask you, now! Really!"

"Solid foundation, you say. But where is it? There ought at least to be some kind of a system, logical consistency, organic development, and not merely a rushing from one extreme to the other," rejoined the editor, but it was obvious to Kalinovich that he was retracting his words, and a faint smile crossed Belavin's features.

"The encyclopaedists, as you say," he began, raising

his eyes to the ceiling, "did not lead to the demoralization of the nation. They merely shattered the feudal authorities and other age-old fetters which deserved to be shattered."

"But these fetters were replaced by others, perhaps still harder to bear, in the person of the Corsican."

"Not at all," countered Belavin. "The revolution of the nineties gave the people both personal rights and the rights of property."

"That's all very fine. But what about the latest events?" asked the editor, who now seemed more inclined to inquire than to dogmatize.

"What about them?" replied Belavin indifferently. "It was a case of exploitation by the bourgeoisie, who wished to seize all political rights and all possible material benefits, which the working men of forty-eight showed them they couldn't do. Since, however, the agricultural classes required not anarchy but order for the protection of their toil, they supported Napoleon III, and if he realizes what is required of him he will be stronger than anyone."

"But where is the progress in this, tell me that," cried the editor.

"Progress?" repeated Belavin, smiling. "Progress is a matter for controversy. All we know is that every era serves the utmost possible development of certain ideas which at first make their way with difficulty, but end by infecting the whole atmosphere."

"That is so," agreed the editor.

At this point Kalinovich rose from his seat and walked up to one of the pictures as if to examine it. He was moved by strange sensations. Throughout the previous conversation he had longed to argue with Belavin and, if possible, talk him down. But, alas! He felt that for all his intellectual aspirations he could not attain to the other's mental level. "Have I really sunk so low in the

provinces that I can't even talk to decent people?" he asked himself, unable to repress a feeling of painful respect mingled with envy for Belavin and one of contempt for himself.

The young man standing beside the bookshelves, who had long been looking kindly at Kalinovich, now came up to him.

"I think I have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Kalinovich?" he said.

"You are right," replied Kalinovich.

"I read your novel with the greatest enjoyment," continued the young man.

Kalinovich thanked him wordlessly, bending his head.

"I'm a writer myself. . . . Dubovsky. . . . I don't suppose you have read any of my books," continued the young man, who combined an expression of humility with an air of fashion, and held his hat pressed against his knee.

"I have read them," replied Kalinovich coldly, though he had done no such thing.

The young man hesitated for a few moments.

"We have such odd ways of trying to please the public, nowadays," he began uncertainly. "Some time ago—last year—seeing that essays are now all the fashion—I wrote *Customs and Superstitions in the Kozinsky District*. But the reviewers were so severe, even in Pavel Nikolaich's magazine," here he turned his eyes timidly in the direction of the editor. "Even there they gave me a highly unfavourable notice. Of course I do not claim to being considered a first-class talent, but I do love literature and work ardently at its pursuit—you wouldn't think a thing like that could be held against a man!"

"Of course not!" agreed Kalinovich, thinking to himself: "What a poor creature!" Unwilling to compromise

himself by talking to such a man, he went back to his former place and picked up his hat.

The editor, noticing him, turned, asking:

"Where were you living?"

"In the N. district," replied Kalinovich.

"N.? Charming country. Passed through it once or twice. Those vast forests . . . that river. N. is on a river, isn't it?"

"Oh yes!"

"A navigable river, I think?"

"Yes—navigable," replied Kalinovich and prepared to leave.

In the meanwhile Belavin was looking at him with growing interest.

"I should like a word or two with you," said the editor, and moved aside. Kalinovich followed him.

"I think your novel was called *The Cavalry Man*, wasn't it?" he said in undertones.

"No—*Strange Relations*," replied Kalinovich.

"How many folios?"

"Nine."

"Nine. Nine forties comes to three hundred and sixty, doesn't it?"

"I was told you paid fifty," said Kalinovich.

"No, no," replied the editor firmly and there and then counted out three hundred and sixty rubles and handed them to Kalinovich.

"I've brought another story," began Kalinovich.

"Send it in by all means. We'll see . . . we'll have a look at it," his host interrupted him, obviously in a hurry to get back to Belavin.

Kalinovich bowed and went out.

"Brutel! He doesn't even know what I wrote," he thought to himself, biting his lip as he descended the stairway. Just then the door opened behind him and Dubovsky caught him up.

"I'm going, too," he said.

At first Kalinovich intended not even to answer him, but then he thought to himself: "This gentleman haunts literary circles. I'll ask him about them."

"Would you care to dine with me?" he said.

"With the greatest pleasure," replied Dubovsky.

"Where does one dine here? Show me, I'm a stranger, you know."

"At Dominic's," said Dubovsky.

"Dominic's let it be, then," agreed Kalinovich.

Arrived at the restaurant they took a table by the window, a little apart, so as not to be too conspicuous. Kalinovich ordered dinner for two and a bottle of wine. He was in some difficulty as to how to open the conversation, but Dubovsky began to speak first.

"I think you got some money from Pavel Nikolaich," he said, leaning mysteriously towards Kalinovich.

"I did," replied Kalinovich.

"A lot?"

"Eight hundred rubles," lied Kalinovich.

Dubovsky started back. Gone was the ingratiating expression on his face.

"Very nice!" he said, shaking his head with an unpleasant smile.

"Not bad," said Kalinovich.

"It's not always the way with him," continued Dubovsky, beginning on his soup and still shaking his head.

"Really?" said Kalinovich innocently.

Dubovsky again smiled unpleasantly.

"I can't speak for others, of course," he said, "but as far as my own experience goes, it isn't."

Kalinovich assumed an expression of sympathy and attention.

"I wrote a kind of historical research or monograph — *Yermak*," began Dubovsky.

"Ah!" said Kalinovich.

"A work to which I devoted three years," said the young author, shrugging his shoulders. "All the documents, papers, contracts were collected and read by me. I omitted nothing and the whole thing came to something like eight printed folios, you know."

"Ah!" repeated Kalinovich. "But you're not drinking!" he added, filling up the other's glass.

"*Merci*," replied Dubovsky and, obviously touched by his own reminiscence, he continued. "I was too cautious to address the publishers directly, so meeting Pavel Nikolaich once at someone's house, I asked if I could hope to be printed in his magazine. He said: 'Very good, delighted!' After that, was I not entitled to be almost certain?"

"Undoubtedly," agreed Kalinovich, beginning to find Dubovsky positively amusing.

"I took my manuscript to him," continued the latter. "A month passed, another, a third—naturally I worried about the fate of my work. . . . I went there to inquire. At first I was told nothing, then they began to receive me coldly, so that I was obliged to write and ask for a definite reply. In answer to my letter I was told that my *Yermak* might be printed, but only in greatly reduced form and with many cuts."

"Cuts! Fancy!" cried Kalinovich gravely.

"Yes," replied his companion significantly. "I went to find out at least what sort of cuts were meant. They showed me—half of it was crossed out. By what wiseacre, what learned man, I have no idea."

Here Dubovsky paused for several moments.

"I do not mention the injury to my feelings as an author. But the point is that, seeing how badly off I am, I could not help, whether from stupidity, or naïveté, or delicacy, I cannot say, call it what you like, but—I consented to this."

"You don't say so," replied Kalinovich, still maintaining his gravity. "And then what happened?"

"And then," continued Dubovsky, his embittered expression giving way to one of grief, "then they published it. . . . I went for my money and they only gave me thirty-five rubles a folio, when I know everyone gets fifty. Naturally I ventured to ask what right they had to draw this distinction. But they only answered calmly that they could not pay more, and turned their backs on me. Is that what you call magnanimous?" he concluded, casting a glance of inquiry at Kalinovich.

The latter only wagged his head.

"You should do something about it—complain to someone. The Governor-General or someone."

"I tried to do something," said Dubovsky, "I've been calling for three months, trying at least to get a definite explanation. But unfortunately I am either not received, or I am placed in such a situation that I cannot say a word."

"What's the good of calling? You must complain to the Governor-General, that's what you must do," repeated Kalinovich, who secretly longed for there to be a scandal.

"I couldn't do that, although I should consider myself justified in telling the whole of Petersburg about it," said Dubovsky, and dinner being over by now, he rose and began pacing the floor, every now and then shaking his head.

Kalinovich got up and lay down on a sofa. He was beginning to get tired of his companion.

"What does he do with his money if he's so mean about such trifling sums?" he asked, just for the sake of saying something.

Dubovsky smiled ruefully.

"There are plenty of uses for money, especially with his passion for women."

"For women?" echoed Kalinovich, highly intrigued.

"Yes," replied Dubovsky with the same rueful smile. "The reigning favourite is a Frenchwoman, whose debts alone cost him not less than twenty-five thousand francs in Paris. If we had been a little earlier we should no doubt have seen her driving down Nevsky Prospekt in a phaeton drawn by two black horses, with a bearskin rug over her knees. What do you think—does that cost nothing?"

"Lucky man!" exclaimed Kalinovich.

"Yes, he's lucky. But what about others? It may be that Russian literature will perish because of that, or ... do you know the dancer Karisheva?"

"No."

"He keeps her too, and fancy—a stunted little woman with fat legs."

"Fat legs are sometimes rather nice," interrupted Kalinovich.

Dubovsky made a scornful face.

"I don't see anything nice in her, and they say she munches sweets from morning to night. And then ... oh, it's too much!" he exclaimed. "The well-known authoress Kasinovskaya lived with him the whole of last winter, and he paid her three hundred silver rubles a folio for her invaluable works. Is she worth it? Compare her work with my labour, say, for which I get paid at the rate of thirty-five rubles!"

"If she's pretty, she's worth it," observed Kalinovich.

"Oh yes, if that's the way you look at it, of course," said Dubovsky, in slightly injured tones, and again took to pacing the floor and shaking his head.

"Who looks after the magazine if he spends so much time with women?" asked Kalinovich.

"There's a certain Zikov, a brainy individual," replied Dubovsky, with a scornful smile.

"Zikov? Was he at Moscow University?" almost shouted Kalinovich.

"I think so."

"Good heavens!" cried Kalinovich. "He's an old friend and comrade of mine, and the best of fellows."

Dubovsky immediately changed his tone.

"They say he's a splendid person," he agreed. "I didn't know him then, of course. If I had gone straight to him with my work it might have had another fate."

"And everything depends on him, you say?"

"Absolutely everything."

"Where does he live? Can you tell me?"

Dubovsky told him.

Kalinovich took down the address at once. Having got all he wanted out of Dubovsky, and no longer desirous of prolonging the conversation with his new acquaintance, he began first to yawn and then to doze off. Observing this, Dubovsky took up his hat and said with his former insinuating smile:

"I hope you will continue our acquaintance."

"Charmed!" replied Kalinovich, holding out his hand without rising.

A few minutes later Dubovsky, solemnly raising his coat collar, was walking along Nevsky Prospekt with an expression of profundity on his face.

"What a fool!" thought Kalinovich, looking out of the window after him, and he finished up the bottle of wine for want of anything better to do. He was in an excited state—the lucky editor with his Frenchwoman, his dancer, and his authoress challenged his imagination in a series of seductive pictures.

"Deuce take it! I'll go and see Amalchen! One must do something to kill time, or one might go mad!" he thought and he hailed a *droshky* and ordered the driver to take him to Gorokhovaya Street.

To the question: "Does Amalchen live here?" the yardman at the Bagov house replied with a half-smile: "Yes, Sir! Go right in! First floor, door on the right, no name." Kalinovich rang. The door was opened by a woman of about thirty-five with harsh Gypsy features.

"Say it's the gentleman who travelled in the train with Mademoiselle Amalchen," said Kalinovich hurriedly.

The woman was evidently used to visits from strangers, and turned from him in silence.

In another moment she was back.

"Take off your coat," she said in ill-humoured tones.

Kalinovich handed his coat to her, at the same time slipping a silver ruble into her palm. The duenna's face softened immediately.

"Go in, the mistress will be here in a minute," she said, her voice now quite friendly, as she hung up his coat.

Kalinovich went into a room feebly lit by a single tallow candle in front of a mirror. The curtains were drawn, and light screens on the window-panes prevented anyone in the street from seeing in. Over a miniature grand piano hung a picture of a woman with a generously exposed bosom. The furniture was well-cushioned. A plush-covered sofa seemed to Kalinovich to be beckoning him to sit down on it with a pretty woman.

In came Amalchen in a carelessly donned dressing-gown. Her arms, which seemed to be moulded of ivory, were quite bare. Her face seemed to be more angelic than ever.

"How do you do," said Kalinovich, going up to her and taking her hand.

"Oh, how do you do!" replied Amalchen, sinking on that very sofa which had seemed so enticing to him.

Kalinovich sat down beside her.

"Well, here I am," he began.

"I see you are," she said, casting a coquettish glance at him. Then, after a slight pause, she began singing in quite an agreeable voice:

*Galopaden tanz ich gern
Mit den jungen hübschen Herr'n.*

"What's that?" asked Kalinovich.

"*Mit den jungen hübschen Herr'n*," repeated Amalchen and suddenly called out: "Masha!"

In the door appeared the bad-tempered woman.

"Is the carriage here?" asked Amalchen.

"It's here, waiting, Miss," replied the woman.

"What d'you want a carriage for?" asked Kalinovich.

"I just wanted a drive," simpered Amalchen and began singing again:

*Mit den braven Offizier'n
Ganz besond'rs mit Kirassier'n.*

"And may I go with you?" asked Kalinovich.

"Yes, you may."

"Go and get dressed then."

"I will," said Amalchen and went into her bedroom, still singing:

*Galopaden tanz ich gern
Mit den jungen hübschen Herr'n.*

A minute or two later she was back, in an expensive pelisse, wearing a hat with a black veil.

At the porch a carriage-and-pair stood waiting.

"Where are we going?" asked Kalinovich.

"Oh, far away! That's what I want," replied Amalchen.

"Drive on!" Kalinovich told the coachman.

The latter first drove them to Admiralty Square, then past the Summer Garden, over the Tsepnoi Bridge and at last to Kirochnaya Street.

"Now where?" he asked.

"Home, I think," said Kalinovich.

"Oh yes! *Il fait froid*," replied Amalchen.

"Home!" cried Kalinovich.

At the entrance to the house Amalchen was the first to jump out of the carriage.

"Hi, lady, when are you going to give me my money?" asked the coachman, turning in his seat.

"Money tomorrow!" replied Amalchen, who was already in the doorway, again singing:

Galopaden tanz ich gern. . .

"Tomorrow? But our master will demand it from us," wailed the coachman.

"Tomorrow, tomorrow!" repeated Amalchen.

"How much?" asked Kalinovich.

"Twenty-five rubles, Your Honour, be so kind! Look how we're treated! Our master makes us pay."

"Twenty-five rubles? Why, we only drove a few streets away," objected Kalinovich.

"A few streets! I've been coming here five days. Our master won't stand it any longer. That's no way—I ask you, now!"

"Shall I give it to him?" asked Kalinovich.

"Oh yes," said Amalchen and ran into the house.

Kalinovich paid the coachman.

"The devil knows what I'm up to," he thought and followed the mistress of the house.

A few minutes later they were again seated on the sofa. Kalinovich could not take his eyes off Amalchen, so fascinating she seemed to him in her pensive pose.

"Masha—tea!" cried Amalchen.

Masha brought in a pretty tea service, a silver tea-pot and a decanter of brandy.

Amalchen filled Kalinovich's cup at least half-way up with brandy.

"I don't drink," he told her.

"Oh, you must drink," she said.

"In that case, you drink, too," put in Kalinovich and, pouring her out half a cupful, drank off his own portion at a gulp.

"Listen," he said, taking Amalchen's hand. "Love me."

"Oh no!"

"Why not?"

"No—that's why!" she replied and sang out:

Galopaden tanz ich gern...

"You and your *Galopaden*—stop it! Why won't you love me?" cried Kalinovich, running his hand through his hair.

"Because! I have an old man . . . and he doesn't want me to. . . ."

"To hell with your old man!" said Kalinovich, putting his arms round her.

"No, no! He gives me money," said Amalchen.

"I have more than he. I'll give you more. How much d'you want? Have another twenty-five."

"No, no! I can't do that!"

"Why can't you? How much d'you want?"

"I want a lot."

"How much?" repeated Kalinovich. "D'you want fifty?"

"Phoo, no!" pouted Amalchen.

"Fifty," repeated Kalinovich and put out the candle. as if for fun.

"Naughty boy!" said Amalchen.

III

To while away the hours with an Amalchen was something quite new in the life of my hero. The next day he made his way to his room from Gorokhovaya, shame-faced and upset. The moment he got home he undressed and threw himself on the bed.

"Heavens! To what I have sunk. Nastenka, my friend—will you ever forgive me?" he exclaimed inwardly, though, as we know, he was perpetually striving to assure himself that Nastenka was nothing to him. By about five o'clock his nerves had quieted down. He glanced involuntarily into his pocket-book and smiled—precisely two hundred rubles were missing from it. "And in one day!" he thought, recalling with horror that Amalchen had promised to be with him by eight. In order to escape this rendezvous he decided to spend the whole evening with Zikov, whom he had quite truthfully called his comrade of school and university days, the only friend of his youth. As students they had shared a room, and Kalinovich was sure that if Zikov was the sole arbiter in the affairs of the magazine, he would do anything for him.

Zikov lived on the fourth floor of a house somewhat withdrawn from the street in an inner courtyard. Instead of the usual brass plate on the door there was nothing but a scrap of paper with his name on it. But Kalinovich was still more surprised when, in response to his ring, the door was opened by an extremely good-humoured-looking young woman in a coarse linen dress and a woollen shawl. Guessing that she must be his friend's wife, he asked politely:

"Is Mr. Zikov at home?"

"Yes, but he's ill," she said.

"I think he would see me. I'm Kalinovich."

"Oh yes, I'm sure he will!" she exclaimed.

Kalinovich followed her into the house. In the tiny entrance hall he caught sight of a fine one-year-old boy, standing all alone on slightly bandy legs, with the tail of his frock tucked up behind. When he saw his mother pass by him he began to cry.

"Don't cry, Seryozha! I'll come for you in a minute,"

she said, shaking her finger at him and turning into a door on the right.

"Haven't they even got a nurse?" wondered Kalinovich. The young woman announced him.

"No! It can't be!"

It was Zikov's voice, half choked with joy.

In his impatience Kalinovich went straight into the room, but stepped back in surprise. The small room was littered with books, notebooks and galley-sheets. The air was close and there was a smell of medicaments. Zikov, wrapped in a shabby dressing-gown, lay on a worn and faded sofa. Instead of the strong healthy youth Kalinovich had known as an undergraduate, he beheld something more like a skeleton than a living human being.

"How are you, Yasha?" he said, sitting up and embracing his visitor.

Kalinovich sensed that Zikov's eyes were filled with tears, and he clasped him warmly in his arms.

"Sit down, now, Yasha, sit down!" said Zikov, sinking back on the sofa and pulling Kalinovich down beside him.

"What's the matter? Are you ill?" asked Kalinovich.

"A little," admitted Zikov, "but I'm so glad to be able to see you again before I die."

"Don't talk about dying!" said the young woman, who had come back with the child in her arms and was sitting down a little way away. The muscles in her cheeks twitched as she spoke.

"I won't, if you don't like it," said Zikov, smiling sadly. "This is my wife, and I don't have to tell her who you are. She knows all about you," he added.

"Yes, I do," she said, looking kindly at Kalinovich.

"Where have you been all this time, what have you been doing? Tell me everything! Talking is hard work for me, you see," continued the sick man.

"Don't talk, I'll tell you everything," interrupted Kalinovich. And he began: "When we graduated, you remember, I had a pupil, and I decided to wait for something to turn up. There was some hope of a teaching post in Moscow and at last a chair fell vacant at the Demidov Lyceum. I waited for them to think of me, and of course I didn't go and see anyone or ask for anything."

Zikov nodded approvingly.

"But they *didn't* think of me," continued Kalinovich, "and when one of my friends suggested me for the post, he was simply told nobody knew anything about me."

Zikov smiled bitterly and shook his head. In the meanwhile the baby had got hold of a ruler in its tiny hands and was banging on the table with all its might.

"Spoilt brat!" thought Kalinovich irritably.

"Go on!" urged the sick man.

"What more is there to tell?" said Kalinovich. "It's the usual story. My lessons came to an end. I had to think of making a living and at last I applied for work under the government. Of course they kept me hanging about nearly six months, but in the end I was told they would be delighted to give me the post of school inspector at N., if I cared for it. And I accepted."

Zikov smote the sofa angrily with his emaciated hand.

"What d'you think of that, Dasha?" he said, turning to his wife.

"Stop it, Seryozha!" she said to her naughty child, placing her hand on the table so that the ruler should fall on it instead, before answering her husband. "Well, since Yakov Vasilich didn't go anywhere or ask for anything himself. . . ."

The sick man became still angrier.

"Didn't go anywhere! . . . Didn't ask!" he exclaimed, coughing. "Instead of praising a man for that, she actually blames him! It's too bad!"

"I'm not blaming him, what makes you so cross?" said the young woman with her meek smile.

"Yes, you are! She marries God knows what sort of a madman herself . . . endures deprivation, hunger, quarrels with her relatives, and then reproaches a man for not being a poltroon, for not truckling and flattering. . . ."

This outburst brought on a fit of coughing that almost choked him.

"Now, now, don't get excited! Here, drink your medicine," said the young woman, handing him a glass containing some mixture.

Zikov swallowed it greedily, and his little son reached out his arms, trying to catch hold of his father's curly hair.

"And what did you do in the provinces?" he asked Kalinovich, sinking back on the sofa again.

"Do? I almost perished of spleen and idleness," replied Kalinovich. "And I want to thank you for printing my novel and giving me a chance to have a look at the great world."

When he said this an expression of sadness crossed Zikov's features.

"You sent it to us through some general," he said mockingly.

"Yes, he was the friend of a friend," replied Kalinovich, half-apologetically.

"Your friend's friends are rotters, old boy," said Zikov. "Especially that seminary upstart, that privy councillor, with his star and his wig, giving himself out as a literary critic and a patron of Russian literature. He sent us your manuscript attached to an office blank, inscribed in that beastly copper-plate of theirs: 'His Excellency Fyodor Fyodorich offers his respects to Pavel Nikolaich and requests him to publish the

enclosed novel which he has read and approved ...' the filthy swine!"

Kalinovich was somewhat taken aback.

"I didn't know of course that you had the disposal of affairs," he said with a forced smile. "Otherwise I would certainly not have applied to anyone else. I've brought you another manuscript which I would ask you to read and advise me what changes are necessary in it, and then have it published."

The last few words seemed to slip out of themselves, but there was no mistaking the imploring tone in which they were spoken. The sick man's expression grew still more melancholy, with a tinge of vexation in it.

"What made you take it into your head to write novels, tell me that!" he rapped out.

Kalinovich was now thoroughly discouraged.

"I felt it was my vocation," he replied, blushing and smiling in his confusion, but corrected himself immediately, adding: "I can't help telling you that the question seems a strange one, coming from you."

"And why?" asked Zikov.

Kalinovich shrugged his shoulders.

"I understand you may not care for my novel—but why take such a tone?" he said.

"Your novel is quite clever. Who on earth thinks you could write anything that wasn't clever?" exclaimed Zikov. "But listen to me!" Here he stopped and seized Kalinovich's hand. "Who are all these principal characters of yours? Isn't there plenty of drama in the lives of simple people, of the middle classes? Why, they fairly seethe with it ... normal passions ... righteous, legitimate protest! One is almost suffocated by poverty ... another endures incessant, unjust insult, a third, amidst scoundrelly, base officials, becomes a scoundrel himself. And you ignore all this and write of gentry in high society, describing the sufferings arising from their strange

relationships! What do I care about them? Don't tell me about them! If they do suffer it's simply from excess of prosperity, the curs! And then—you lie about them. They haven't got it in them, they haven't the mind or the intelligence, it's not in their nature, which has become utterly degenerate. Their sufferings probably come from indigestion, or because they can't snap up enough money or, by hook or by crook, get their husbands made generals, and you attribute subtle sufferings to them."

Here Zikov was once more seized with a violent fit of coughing, his face suffused with crimson.

His wife turned pale, and going up to him, pressed his head firmly, in the hope of doing something, however little, to ease the attack.

"Stop your raging! I'll tell the doctor!" she admonished. "And you, Yakov Vasilich," she added, turning to Kalinovich who sat there going white and red in turn and biting his lip, "don't believe him! He liked your book, and so did I, and so did everyone."

"You are very kind," he replied, and turned to Zikov.

"And do you only reproach me with the social milieu I have chosen to depict, and which you for some reason dislike—is that all?"

"No—not only for that," insisted the sick man. "In the first place your thought is not original, it is taken from *Jacques*."

Kalinovich flushed.

"And it is not expressed through living persons, not a bit," continued Zikov. "And I, a dying man, firmly maintain the conviction that the artist even thinks in images. Look at Pushkin, in his purely lyrical passages: 'In the never to be forgotten hour, the hour of grief, I wept long in thy presence'—an image. 'My dying arms endeavoured to embrace thee'—an image again. 'But you withdrew your lips from the bitter kiss'—yet another

er image. For heaven's sake, hasn't there been enough objectivity? Give me lyricism, real, not artificial lyricism—like my beloved Turgenev, for instance, with whom whether he goes into a wood, roams the country with peasant boys, or describes some officer duellist, there is poetic feeling underlying it all. If you have nothing but reason and ability, old man, you may become a lawyer, an administrator, a scientist, but a poet or a novelist—never."

Kalinovich made no protest, but the lady of the house stood up for him again.

"How can you speak so positively? Yakov Vasilich has written one book and you pass judgement on it, he'll write another, and your opinion will be different, I know it will," she told her husband.

Zikov flung out his hands.

"For God's sake!" he exclaimed. "Do you really think I would say a word if I didn't think the world of him, dear lad? Do you suppose he's another Dubovsky who, when they cut out a whole part, calmly says, 'Never mind,' and writes another? And anyhow, to hell with literature! It only ruins people. Look what it's brought me to—utter devastation and pulmonary lesions. I don't want him to share the same fate," concluded Zikov, beating his breast and closing his eyes in something like despair.

The poor wife turned aside to wipe away a tear. Kalinovich lowered his gaze.

"Take that little chap of mine—this is my deathbed injunction to his mother: let him become a soldier, a drummer, a barber, a policeman, anything but a writer, anything but a writer," the sick man concluded in a hoarse voice, closing his eyes in exhaustion.

Kalinovich exchanged mute glances with the young woman. "Have you been in the provinces all the time?" she asked him.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich.

"And you didn't get married there?"

"No."

"There must be lots of pretty girls there," continued the young woman, smiling.

"Oh no," said Kalinovich, sighing slightly, and they went on chatting for some time in a somewhat strained fashion. At last Zikov opened his eyes. Kalinovich seized the opportunity, and glancing as if casually at his watch, rose abruptly.

"I must say good-bye," he murmured.

The sick man turned his melancholy gaze upon him.

"Where are you off to in such a hurry? Stay," he said.

"I'm afraid I can't. I'm going to the theatre, I haven't been there yet," replied Kalinovich.

Zikov half sat up.

"In that case, good-bye. Off with you but give me a kiss." He endeavoured to press Kalinovich's hand with his feeble chilly fingers.

Kalinovich bent down and kissed him.

"In any case, dear friend," he said, "even though you do not admit that I have talent, my next novel is written and I should hate to think I had spent so much time for nothing, so do publish it, and try to get me a permanent job on the magazine! My circumstances make this essential."

"All right, all right, we'll get you something, but don't write any more novels," answered Zikov, smiling.

"I won't, I won't!" said Kalinovich, smiling too.

Zikov's wife rose to see him out, standing her baby against a chair before going out of the room.

"You mustn't be angry with him. You see how nervous he is and how terribly ill," she said.

"Of course I won't," Kalinovich answered her. "But what's the matter? Has he been like this long?"

"It's all that horrid work and proof-reading. He

worked day and night," she said, the tears flowing down her cheeks.

"Evidently it really would be better to give up literature," said Kalinovich, shaking his head.

"Much better," she said as she shut the door behind him.

My hero had been forced to exert terrible efforts in order to endure the foregoing scene. Only one who knows an author's vanity and has felt the shock of sudden disillusionment can realize the bitterness and intensity of his sufferings—to have nourished hopes for six years, to have been deprived at a single blow of the starry path to a career! When his novel was returned to him in the provincial town he had had every excuse for attributing it to injustice, to the editor's ignorance. But this was different—he knew Zikov too well to be able to console himself with the thought that his words were inspired by envy or lack of understanding. Moreover, Kalinovich was too intelligent not to realize his limitations at least vaguely. It had been his own convictions that had spoken to him through the lips of his friend. He knew very well that he was no artist, that he lacked the divine fire, that which compels one to work for no known reason or aim, but simply because one's whole happiness and well-being lies in such work. He had turned to literature in the hope of getting fame and wealth, thinking to take his readers in, and here was one of the most advanced of them who had not been taken in! There might be hundreds more like him, who would in their turn be followed by the crowd. And heavens, the curses my hero heaped on his own head for his foolish immature hopes! The curses he heaped on literature itself and its publishers, its Dubovskys and its Zikovs! "I shall have to get a government job," he decided and only went to the theatre so as not to be at home, where he was threatened by a visit from Amal-

chen. At the box-office he unexpectedly encountered Belavin. For a short time he did not know whether to bow to him or not, but Belavin, catching sight of him, held out his hand very cordially and spoke to him first.

"How d'you do, Kalinovich. You going to the theatre too?"

"Why, yes," admitted Kalinovich.

They bought seats next to one another and went into the theatre. Their neighbour was a youthful student with a fine head of hair, which he wore combed back from his forehead—altogether an extremely handsome young man, but he looked around him with an expression so solemn and gloomy that one couldn't help noticing him.

Kalinovich himself was so extremely pale and agitated that Belavin asked him:

"What's the matter with you? Aren't you well?"

"Not quite," he said. "I came here for distraction." And added for the sake of saying something: "It's a drama tonight, isn't it?"

"*Othello*," Belavin told him. "I don't know how it'll be this time, but sometimes it's splendid. What I like best of all is the audience—their naïveté is so engaging, the things they admire and the things that touch them..."

"Yes," said Kalinovich, still so stunned that he could only speak in monosyllables.

"It's marvellous!" continued Belavin.

The student who had been listening to them attentively, at these words regarded them still more sombrely. In the meantime the curtain rose—and which of us does not remember Karatigin's* entry in *Othello*? As the Moor he seemed to fly into the senatorial council like a sable crow, capable of overpowering not merely a single dove, but a veritable flock of geese. There was applause from the gallery and the stalls.

* Karatigin—famous XIX century actor.—Tr.

"Dear, dear!" said Belavin under his breath, lowering his eyelids.

Kalinovich, who scarcely saw anything that was going on on the stage, responded with a civil smile. The student looked at them again.

"Bad, bad!" said Belavin.

"What's bad?" asked the student suddenly, his eyes blazing.

"It's bad that he doesn't speak, doesn't move naturally. It's all so pompous," replied Belavin, smiling, but quite courteously.

"He sees himself as a general accustomed to lead his battalion on the field of battle," said the student, shrugging his shoulders. "And in my opinion it's historically correct."

"Even the glorious calling of a general does not entitle him to rant," rejoined Belavin. "Othello's majesty should appear at certain moments, arising from certain moods, he definitely is not one of those gentlemen who, having once for all created for themselves a pose of grandeur, never drop it for a moment, but dine, walk, and, I suppose, sleep in it."

With these words Belavin glanced significantly at Kalinovich. Throughout the act, whenever the tragedian's loud cries were greeted with applause, the two friends either made a face or looked down. When the curtain fell at the end of the act, Belavin, as if worn out with boredom, rose, clutching his temples.

"This gentleman has been acting for twenty-five years," he said peevishly, turning to Kalinovich, "and never an inspired word! Nothing but shouting, shouting. His way of getting up a part, according to what I have heard, is remarkable—one of them, say, has five hundred and twenty-two separate effects. Each one, from *a* to *z*, is learned by heart and, to the accompaniment of conscientiously emphasized bodily movements, is produced

before the footlights. I am angry with you: I turn aside abruptly, waving you away with my hands. I love you: I turn upon you a face of imbecile tenderness, take your hands and press them to my heart. I wish to intimidate you, so I roll my eyes, seize your hands, squeezing them till the bones crack—and I do all this without the faintest logical development of passion, but simply when I feel like it, wherever the exclamation marks are thickest. And after this you can judge the exquisite mud-dle that emerges!"

"That's the French school, of course," said Kalinovich, at the same time telling himself scornfully: "Is it for me to criticize art since I am utterly bereft of talent myself?"

"No doubt," rejoined Belavin, "but the point is that there, as in any long-established branch of art, there are good traditions. The playwrights themselves, knowing that certain situations have been thoroughly worked out by the actors, make a point of introducing them into their plays. And the actors, bearing in mind that some great actor once made a sensation by this or that piece of stage 'business,' do their best to assimilate it, and thus some tolerable effect is achieved, by means, at the lowest, of thought, restraint, sense of theatre. Here there is nothing, nothing but the rantings of a healthy bull."

The student listened to the whole of Belavin's monologue with an unblinking stare.

"Mochalov* stands much higher in this respect," remarked Kalinovich, again just for the sake of saying something.

"Come now—how can you compare them!" exclaimed Belavin. "This one's a mere play actor, a ballet dancer, and Mochalov's at least a human being. Come now, those fine, mobile features, that attractive voice . . . come now!"

* Mochalov—famous XIX century actor.—*Tr.*

"I have heard, on the contrary, that Mochalov has neither voice nor stature," interpolated the student.

"I'm afraid I don't know what sort of voice and stature are required. Perhaps a drum-major or something of that sort would do. But when I see before me a man whose state of mind is equal to that of Hamlet's, I boldly conclude that he is a great man and a great actor," declared Belavin with a touch of annoyance, sinking back into his seat.

The curtain rose, and at the end of the act he again addressed Kalinovich:

"Observe that this gentleman expresses only one single characteristic of Othello, and one that, by the way, does not belong to him—bloodthirstiness. What d'you think of that? That passionate, nervous, tender nature is shown as a mere butcher. All he thinks of is: 'Blood. I thirst for blood!' It's a disgrace."

With these words, Belavin rose.

"Let's go," he said, nodding at Kalinovich.

The latter followed him without a word. They went into the foyer, where, as everyone knows, the audience from the dress-circle and the stalls mostly congregate. And here his new friend rose still higher in Kalinovich's estimation. Almost the moment they entered the foyer they were met by a general.

"Acts marvellously," he said to Belavin, obviously anxious to discover his opinion.

"Oh yes, extremely warlike acting," replied Belavin with an ambiguous smile.

"That's it," said the General and passed on.

A little further on they were overtaken by a grey-haired gentleman of austere appearance, who sported a star on the lapel of his coat.

"Good evening, Pyotr Sergeich," he said in almost ingratiating accents.

"Good evening," replied Belavin in casual tones, as he passed.

A lady coming in their direction spoke to him in a voice of something like entreaty.

"When are you coming to see me, *cher ami*?"

"Today, Countess, today," he replied, smiling.

"Yes, do," said the countess, as she turned away.

There could be no doubt that Belavin lived in the highest circles, and counted for something there.

"I wonder if I could work him for a job," thought Kalinovich, and set about it with feelings of desperation.

"I came here with the intention of going in for literature, but apparently I shall have to enter the service," he said.

"How's that?" asked Belavin.

Kalinovich shrugged his shoulders.

"Because literature," he began, "is all concentrated in the magazines, nowadays, which are in the hands of editors, on whom a man without a private fortune cannot depend, for not only do they pay very badly, but, I hear, they do not always pay properly or even honestly."

"So I hear, so I hear," put in Belavin, shaking his head mournfully.

"When you come face to face with the public you see, as we have just seen, how much sense and comprehension there is in them."

"Not much, not much," agreed Belavin.

"Besides," continued Kalinovich, "I myself, as a writer, do not possess that simian, actor's gift of holding up various persons to mockery, and giving them out as types. The only thing I care about in whatever I write is—thought. But that's just what's not wanted nowadays."

"Thought! It's the absence of thought we want!" exclaimed Belavin.

"And so I shall have to get a job," concluded Kalinovich, smiling.

Belavin looked up at the ceiling, and then looked down again.

"In a State where every one is an employee the most convenient and pleasant thing is, of course, to be the same," he said, after which there was silence for a short time.

"My difficulty in this respect," began Kalinovich again, "is that I haven't the faintest idea how to set about it."

"Come now!" said Belavin emphatically. "That's a way of sorrows. Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

"Still, some sort of protection is required to begin with," interrupted Kalinovich, and stopped, in the hope that Belavin might volunteer to help him.

But Belavin said nothing.

"The only thing I have is a letter to a director," continued Kalinovich, naming the director in question. "But who knows what sort of a person he is," he added, shrugging his shoulders.

"They say he's a very nice man," said Belavin at last, with a half-smile, and it would have been impossible to discover what his words really meant.

"But when can he be seen, I don't even know that," asked Kalinovich.

"In the mornings, I suppose, some time round twelve," said Belavin. "That's when he feels himself to be the chief. Later in the day he becomes a mere insignificant slave, the target of abuse, so the morning would be better." Belavin's tone was obviously scornful, not to say hostile.

Kalinovich thought it better to change the subject.

"The play will be beginning again soon, I suppose," he said.

"No doubt, but I'm leaving. Do come and see me! I live on Nevsky, c/o Engelhardt," said Belavin, and he went away.

Kalinovich went back to his stall. The moment he sat down the student addressed a question to him:

"What's the name of your friend?"

"Belavin."

"And what's your name?"

"Kalinovich," he said, thinking the student would ask him if he were not the author of the famous novel *Strange Relations*. But the student did nothing of the sort.

"Even that lad doesn't know I'm a writer," thought Kalinovich, as he left the theatre. When he got home and went to bed he repeated over and over again: "A job, I must get a job," while Zikov's verdict that he was no artist did not cease to rankle in his heart.

IV

Notwithstanding his firm resolution to enter government service, Kalinovich allowed a full week to pass before he presented himself to the director. Though he had not as yet come into contact with its bureaucratic side he was beginning to get an inkling of what Petersburg really was, and felt misgivings. At last, timid and apprehensive, he went to the director's house, and the hand that tugged at the bell-pull was nothing like so confident as when it had rung the publisher's bell. The door was opened by a messenger.

"I have a letter—" Kalinovich brought out humbly.

"For the General?" asked the messenger.

"Yes, for the General," said Kalinovich after a slight pause. He had as yet to learn that in Petersburg even those who are not in the military service are called generals on attaining the so-called fourth rank in the governmental hierarchy.

Motioning him to the door of the waiting-room, the messenger tiptoed towards the General's office.

Kalinovich went in and began looking round him. The colour of the wallpaper was exceedingly pleasing and there were bronze ornaments with gilded handles on a marble mantelpiece in the corner. Heavy draperies afforded a glimpse of a drawing-room, in which bizarre furniture stood about in the shade of a veritable grove of cactuses, potted plantains and oleanders. The director's apartment went with the post, and there was an allowance for furniture.

There were a few other people in the room besides Kalinovich—an amiable if insignificant-looking young government clerk in a buttoned-up uniform, holding a dispatch case, another, also in uniform, with a refined but drowsy countenance and pince-nez perched on the bridge of his nose, pacing backwards and forwards in front of the door into the General's office, and whistling (under his breath, it is true) an air from *Lucia*, as if to show he was not awed by the place in which he found himself. The real petitioners, however, were two—a young woman with beautiful brown eyes and an old man. The face of the woman-petitioner was drawn with suffering, and her lips were dry and parched. Her dress had obviously been dyed, her hat was cheap and her gloves were the worse for wear. Despite, however, the poverty of her appearance, her clothes betrayed a certain taste. It was obvious that this was a woman who knew how to dress and had once dressed very differently. Next to her sat a little old man with a bald pate; he evidently belonged to that specifically Finnish-Petersburg type whose very appearance seems to proclaim that the individual has never been either clever or good-looking and has certainly never entertained anything in the way of elevated thought or feeling, that there is nothing special about him whatever, unless perhaps the fact that his

conduct has always been exemplary. For all his shabbiness, however, the little old man was meticulously neat and clean in his apparel. Somewhat apart from the others, in a strictly correct uniform, his sword at his side and his hat under his arm, stood another man; to judge from his unpleasant yellowish eyes, the wide nostrils of his small nose and his sour smile, he must have been an exceedingly splenetic individual.

Half an hour elapsed. The young man with the pince-nez began to yawn.

"Will Lev Nikolaich be coming out soon?" he asked the other official.

"I think so, Your Excellency," the latter answered with a certain deference.

The young man resumed his pacing up and down and his whistling.

At last a little girl of about ten years old, in a tightly belted starched skirt, well above her bare knees in the Scotch fashion, appeared on the threshold of the drawing-room.

"Good morning, my dear," the modest young official said to her.

She curtseyed in reply and tripped into her Papa's study, no doubt to wish him good morning; a few moments later she came running joyfully out of the room, in her hand a dainty little basket of bonbons.

Soon after, Papa himself appeared in the doorway. This was a tall, lean individual with a prominent simian jaw, wearing a star on the right side of his spruce uniform. At the sight of him all the petitioners seemed to draw themselves up.

"*Pardon, comte!*" he said, hastily walking up to the young man and shaking hands warmly with him. "You have no idea how busy I am—right up to here!" he added, placing his hand under his chin. But his long, exquisitely manicured finger-nails, which the gesture

exposed, gave rise to strong suspicions that it was not business which had occupied the director until now, so much as the adornment of his frail, mortal envelope.

"Pardon; dans un moment je serai à vous. Ayez la bonté d'entrer dans ma chambre. Pardon!" he repeated.

The young man gave a familiar nod and walked into the study. The director turned his eyes towards the old man.

"Your affair is settled, quite settled," he said, approaching him and pressing his emaciated hand.

"So I can get the money today, Your Excellency, can I?"

"That you can, Sir, and spend it, too!" the director added, with a gaiety which did not seem to go very well with his appearance and rank.

The old man responded with a broad grin.

"Why not, Your Excellency? There's life in the old dog yet! You know the proverb: A grey beard, but a lusty heart. Good-bye, Your Excellency," he said, bowing servilely.

"Good-bye!" echoed the director and shook him by the hand once more.

The old man went away.

The shadow of a sneer seemed to flicker across the features of the uniformed official. The director now beckoned with grave courtesy to the lady to follow him towards the window. She obeyed and began speaking in undertones, but the words seemed to stick in her throat and she had difficulty in breathing. *"Mon mari—mes enfants..."* was all Kalinovich was able to make out. The director listened to her, shrugging his shoulders.

"Que puis je faire, madame?" he exclaimed, pressing his hand to his heart. "If your husband had been my own son, if I myself had been in his place—I neither could nor would have been able to do anything."

A deathly pallor spread over the young woman's face.

"We have our own justice, our own juridical conscience," the director went on. "Take political offenders, for instance! Many of them are honourable persons who evoke our pity, but they must be punished, for they are criminals in the eyes of the law."

The poor woman cast a wild, vacant look at him.

"But, General, my husband is no criminal! He is an upright man and has always worked honestly," she said, her voice now indignant.

"*Que faire!* He's been ill a whole year and we can't turn the office into a hospital or a charity institution. *Je vous répète encore une fois, que je n'en puis rien faire,*" concluded the director, calmly turning his back on her without deigning to notice her look of anguish and the almost reeling gait with which the poor woman left the room.

"Not one of your over-sensitive gentlemen," Kalinovich said to himself, as the director made straight for him with an interrogative look.

He presented himself:

"Titular Councillor Kalinovich!"

"Oh yes! *Attendez un peu,*" said the director amiably, and turning to the gentleman in uniform, addressed him in strictly official tones: "What can I do for you?"

"Why must I perish? That's what I ask you, Your Excellency?" cried the latter, trying in vain to tone his voice down to that of a supplicant's.

The director made a grimace of contempt.

"Your case has not been looked into yet, and therefore I know nothing of it and can say nothing," he rapped out, and turning his back on him abruptly, stalked into his study.

The clerk shot a venomous glance after him, but after gazing at the floor for some time he seemed to get a sudden idea and sidled up to the young official with the dispatch case.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Makreyev?" he asked.

"That's my name," said Makreyev politely.

"Then the case of Zabokov must be in your department, I take it."

"It is."

"I am the unfortunate Zabokov himself," the clerk went on. "If only you would be so kind as to let me explain things to you! Please do, now!" he said, suddenly breaking off and again trying to sound humble.

"I shall be happy to oblige you," the young official answered with equal politeness.

"The Governor has written," proceeded Zabokov, ticking off each grievance as he came to it on the fingers of his hand, "that I am a drunken rowdy; but in propounding such a libelous statement His Excellency must have forgotten that every time he travelled through the gubernia I had the pleasure of entertaining him in my own house and that he even condescended to stand godfather to my youngest son; if I really am the immoral person they make me out, how is it that the Governor allowed himself to be on such familiar terms with me?"

"Quite so, but what has it got to do with the case as it stands?" asked the official diffidently.

"What has it got to do with the case? Why, really!" replied the clerk vehemently. The Governor now writes that I am negligent of my duty and have a tendency to seek my own interests—really now! How is it then that he kept a clerk who was negligent of his duty and had a tendency to seek his own interests for six whole years? Next: each time after an inspection this negligent clerk received an official testimony, published in the gubernia decrees for the years 1839, 1840, and 1841, while in 1842 he was actually recommended for the Order of St. Anne of the Third Degree—do you mean to say this has no

bearing on the case, either?" he concluded, baring his teeth in anger.

"Well, and if it did have any bearing on the case, what of it?" asked the young official in obvious bewilderment.

"The law will tell you what the penalty for false information is," Zabokov answered with conviction. "And I will not leave it at that," he went on. "I will go to the very top, for the Ministry has made one mistake after another here."

"Indeed, and what are the mistakes?" asked the young man, trying to affect a sneer.

"These are their mistakes," replied Zabokov in the same strain as before. "I am removed from my post and put on trial. My case, after having been discussed in the criminal court, is transferred to the Senate, and all of a sudden the Ministry gives orders to start fresh investigations and have me locked up. On what grounds, may I ask, did they do that?"

"It was done, if I am not mistaken, on the strength of fresh representations from the head of the gubernia," replied the young man.

The provincial jurist gave a bitter smile.

"One minute, please! They had no right to do it," he said. "Fresh representations should have been sent to the Senate by the Governor for public discussion—and nothing more, Sir! And if the Senate, with the supreme powers invested in it, saw fit to look into these representations, the Ministry could then carry them out, and have me put under lock and key. It could not do this on its own initiative, being subject to the supreme power of the Senate. Thus at least it is written in the law, and so it has ever been, though I don't of course know how it may be nowadays!"

"Very well, then," the young official replied, the forced smile still on his lips. "Supposing, now, you were to murder someone. Would you insist on this fresh offence

being merely added to a case which happened to have been started against you before?"

"Excuse me, not at all! You're quite wrong, I'm afraid. Murder is a crime involving disfranchisement, and in such cases the police are indeed justified in taking immediate action while the scent is fresh, with no respect for persons. It's all the same to them whether I am a field marshal or an official under arrest. Whereas the accusations against me, my dear Sir, are of a purely official nature, and therefore are subject to general considerations affecting the case in itself. The law is the same for everybody, I presume, and we know a thing or two about it. I myself have gone grey in the tsar's service, and I ought to know what I'm talking about; but as I have explained in my paper to the Minister, all my misfortunes are due to the intimacy between the Governor and Madame Markova, an intimacy I have endeavoured again and again to bring to the attention of the government, with a view to having light thrown on it from the legal point of view. And why my solicitations have been left unanswered I fail to understand."

"Now he drags in some Madame Markova," cried the young official, looking down and smiling.

"Yes, Sir, I said Markoval" Zabokov went on. "You may find it all very amusing, but what if not only a miserable worm like myself, but the whole gubernia suffers on her account? The government should have taken notice of it long ago. Love is all-powerful: minds greater than that of our Governor have been turned by it and have forgotten the justice prescribed by the law."

The young official drooped his eyelids still lower. Such explicit and outspoken statement was in his opinion quite uncalled-for in official life.

"It is through no fault of my own that I perish," the other man went on in the meantime, "but simply because my place was needed for one Sinitsky, who is her brother,

just as the still vacant post of mayor of Bakhty was taken by another relation of hers, now on trial in connection with the murder of an infant by a peasant-girl on his estate, who threw her child into the well, a fact which he tried to suppress for the reason that the said peasant-girl was his mistress."

The young official smiled ambiguously.

"But all this, you know," he began, but was interrupted by the sound of a bell from the study, which caused a messenger to hurry in from the outside. Next moment he popped his head out of the study.

"Is the Count's case ready?" he asked.

"It is," the official answered hastily.

"The General will see you," said the messenger.

The young official, snatching up his dispatch case, rushed into the study, followed by angry looks from the provincial clerk.

"And so if you happen to be small fry," he began with a bitter smile, half-addressing Kalinovich, "you must be content to perish. Nobody wants to hear anything bad about people at the top. For instance, they send down a new governor; there are millions under him, and if he understands his business in the slightest we thank the Lord even for that. He usually begins by kicking out like an unbroken horse. 'I'm out for justice!' cries he, and within the next six months you will find that one of us—some superior office clerk—has bridled this seeker of justice, and is riding him for all he is worth. These people recognize only one rule, all of them: 'Give us our share, but don't dare to take yours!' And where am I to get his share for him, I'd like to know? Or else they send us an ordinary young man, and what does he do the very first thing? Goes and finds himself a mistress in Troitskaya Street, and sometimes not just one, but, as if he were some oriental potentate, two or three, and the whole gubernia has to grovel before them! And it's always the

subordinate who's to blame. Oh, my God!" concluded Zabokov, raising his shoulders as if in amazement. Addressing Kalinovich again, he added:

"And do you intend to serve here, Sir, or—"

"Yes, I shall probably be working here," replied Kalinovich.

"That's right, and the Lord be with you! It's no use working in one of those Godforsaken holes of ours, a young man can only soil his hands. I can give you an instance of that. My eldest son is, I may say without boasting, a good, intelligent lad; graduated from the Demidov Lyceum, one of its best pupils. He then gets himself accepted as private secretary—not such a bad opening for a young man, it would seem, if things had gone the right way, but, all inexperienced as he is, he has the misfortune to serve under a refractory and arrogant chief. The moment he arrives in the gubernia, without waiting to look about him, he sits down and writes to Petersburg that everything down here is disgusting, insupportable; you see, he hoped to get credit for that, showing them what a good boy he was, so that they'd give him a rise and maybe an award. But they demanded facts. And so he summoned all his young men and sent them all over the gubernia. Oh my, didn't they go it! I sent my son a letter: 'Now mind what you're about, Alexander!' I wrote. 'You may say anything you like to your chief, to please him, but don't you go and commit yourself in writing.' But would he heed me, Sir? Not he! This is how he writes to me in reply: he says, 'My chief is so important and so clever, Papa, that he doesn't need to be over-particular about the law.' So you see, they think they're cleverer than the law! Of course it all ended in the clever man being transferred to another place for the harshness of his orders, and his assistants being left stranded. The new man sent in his place came with a different song: an elderly man, with a

family, not rich; of course he wouldn't want young people round him, what he needed was people of experience, who would know all about the good things of the world—how to get them and all that. So he summons all our lads and says in the gentlest of voices: 'We must look into their activities,' and of course it is discovered that this one has exceeded his authority, and that one has made groundless accusations, while a third has adopted a prejudiced view of a case. 'That is not the way to work, gentlemen!' he says and puts two of them in gaol; my son he advises to resign. 'Well, Alexander,' I say, 'much good has it done you, all this tearing about! You have ruined yourself, helped nobody and gone against the law to boot!'"

"Better suffer in a noble cause than be sacked for taking bribes!" said Kalinovich with a frown.

"What are bribes, Sir?" countered Zabokov. "Everyone takes bribes nowadays. Look at these youngsters we've just been talking about! You see a lot of them at the law courts now, and I cannot say they make a very pleasant impression. In the old times the judge, ensconced behind the emblem of justice, would be a venerable old person adorned by orders and his own grey locks, and now—good Lord!—his place is taken by some lanky, fidgety greenhorn! They don't take bribes, they say, but you just dig a little deeper, and you'll see; two landlords, for instance, are suing one another; you happen to know that one of them is in the right, and you see that the case is being decided in favour of his adversary. And why? Because this adversary gives balls and banquets with champagne, porter and brandy, or perhaps has a clever and beautiful young wife who knows how to talk French with the young men—that's all! And isn't it all the same—don't they, too, forget their vow never to act against their conscience—for gain, relatives or friends? The sin is the same in the eyes of the Lord, and it isn't in money

alone that bribes are given! There are many kinds of bribes, and the world couldn't get on without them."

"But they don't take bribes in other countries."

"Not take bribes? Impossible!" retorted Zabokov. "Impossible, Sir!" he repeated in positive tones. "Wherever there are human beings there must be bribes. This Petersburg of yours boasts: 'Our officials are all high-minded folk'; and so they should be. If, for instance, I were to live in such lofty chambers as these," here Zabokov stopped talking and cast a comprehensive glance over the room, "perhaps I would think more of my honour as a gentleman born, and my hands would remain as it were unpolluted even though I did handle dirt? And after all, how are things in reality? His Excellency did not so much as nod to us, but he gave his hand to the old man, who, it appears, provides the office with fuel, lighting and stationery. It needs no oracle to tell you the meaning of this. Yes, Sir, though we live in an outlandish place, we've heard something of the goings-on here. Instead of sending inspectors to us, they'd do better to call us here—we'd unearth a thing or two. Sometimes they put a person in a high post, who, poor fellow, happens to be a bit weak in the top storey. So, obviously, he must surround himself with clever people. But people have become, oh, so sharp. When they see they are wanted they get all *they* want out of you. 'I serve faithfully,' they say, 'life is so expensive in the city—I'm a poor man.' Well, and then there's official outlay—a big sum, and so he gets a loan of five thousand on the quiet—that's how it goes. In our town, too, the governor came down on the commissary of police, found twenty rubles missing and sent him into the army—a *thief*, forsooth! Or, say, an official is sent to some state-owned village, and feeling hungry, asks for food there; everyone will be down on him, calling him a parasite, forgetting that even a hungry dog is sure to be fed when it strays into a decent house!"

Kalinovich was getting thoroughly sick of Zabokov's peroration.

"Who's the young man, a Count? Do you know him?" he asked, to change the subject.

Zabokov gave a short laugh and shook his head.

"That's the new vice-director," he answered slyly. "He's so well-born, you see, it would be a shame if his country did not have the benefit of his services. He has neither beard nor whiskers as yet, and who knows, perhaps no brains, either, but he is appointed to a high post with, it may be, three thousand a year; he'll sign two or three papers a week for it—yes, Sir! Whereas we small fry toil and sweat the year round, fill up mountains of forms, and are of course told that we draw our salaries for nothing. What is a man to do?" cried Zabokov. But just then the door of the study was flung open and the new vice-director marched across the waiting-room with a quick step. Our provincial radical fell silent and drew himself up.

"The General would like you to step in," said the clerk, looking into the room and addressing himself to Kalinovich.

The study which Kalinovich entered was as large as the editor's but differed from it in the order and officialdom which reigned there. The director was seated behind his desk.

"Take a seat," he said, straightening the cross hanging round his neck.

Kalinovich sat on the edge of a wooden arm-chair.

"*Voulez-vous fumer?*" said the director civilly, offering him a cigar and actually holding a light for him.

For all his poise Kalinovich felt on the verge of embarrassment. He accepted the cigar with shaking fingers and began smoking it awkwardly; the director lit his own with an air of one who intends to hold forth at length.

"The Count writes," he began, "that you would like an appointment in Petersburg."

"Yes, Your Excellency, I need one very much," replied Kalinovich, raising himself a little in his seat.

"Quite so," drawled out the director, "but I am going to say to you what I have said a dozen times to young men who came here with the same request—all within this week, too. What is it, gentlemen, that makes you all wish to work in Petersburg? See what it leads to! We don't know what to do with our brilliant, well-educated young people here, whereas the provinces are choked with men like that one you saw in the waiting-room, who has been sacked, and who of course was good for nothing but bribes and mischief. I wonder your generation does not feel it a disgrace?"

"But what is there to do in the provinces?" Kalinovich put in diffidently.

"Anything you wish!" cried the director. "What can you hope for here, at the best? To become assistant senior clerk, then senior clerk, or even head of some office—which is, as I know you will agree with me, a job for a petty scribe, a meaningless shifting of meaningless papers from one place to another; whereas if you go to the provinces, you'll find a living stream everywhere. Take legal work, for instance—you are brought face to face with the people, learn what their passions, their vices, their needs are—or say that you take the post of secretary of some criminal court. Why, the fates of those people hang on you alone, for the members do nothing—you may take my word for it—but put their names to documents. Believe me, Sir! There's nothing like the provinces for training."

"But there are no prospects in provincial offices, Your Excellency," remonstrated Kalinovich.

"On the contrary, there are a great deal more than in the capital," retorted the director. "Here you have a

thousand chances of being overlooked, but there, with your education and everything, you are sure to be noticed. The governor, say, or some other chief, gets to know you well, and since as often as not they do not stick in the provinces all their lives, but get promoted and sent here, he'll bring you with him—as one whose worth he has learned to value. And thus you appear here, an experienced official, a man of the world. By that time you'll have learned all about Russia, and not merely statistics, you'll have learned how the machinery of government works in real life, and this is highly important. People with practical knowledge, who can act, and not merely propound, are what we need most of all at present."

Not knowing what to say to this, Kalinovich remained silent.

"I am only too well aware," resumed the director, "that all you young people hanker after Petersburg, with its refined pleasures; but believe me, you would find you had neither time to enjoy them, nor money to spend on them if you worked here; and after all, if there is a certain amount of self-sacrifice in it, why not make it? Look at the English, Sir! They will toil for a lifetime in some remote colony and enjoy themselves as if they were in London itself; and we are loth to undergo three or four years of tedium in the provinces for the public weal! Such selfishness is unpardonable in my opinion! But why should I say that—people ought to try and avoid Petersburg if only from selfish motives alone, for its foul climate which poisons every breath of air drawn."

"I don't think I'd mind the climate much if I had marble mantelpieces like that in my rooms," thought Kalinovich.

"You see, Your Excellency, I have special reasons for wishing to live here, for I have literary inclinations," he said, hoping thus to raise himself in the eyes of the

director; but the latter remained imperturbable, merely allowing a shadow of derision to flicker round his mouth.

"Oh, you have literary inclinations, have you? The Count said nothing of that," he sneered.

"Yes, but they're not very strong, you know," replied Kalinovich, realizing he had missed the mark.

"And what is it you write? Prose or poetry?" the director asked.

"Prose."

"What sort of prose?"

"I write novels," answered Kalinovich and felt the colour mounting to his cheeks.

"Oh, novels!" echoed the director. "In that case, don't you think you had better give all your time to writing? Why work in an office? Surely it would stand in the way of your poetical pursuits!"

He was openly derisive by now.

"My literary achievements are so insignificant, Your Excellency, that I am ready to sacrifice them altogether if necessary and devote myself to the service," Kalinovich hastened to explain.

"I see," the director drawled out and fell into a reverie, regarding his long nails the while.

"I would have been very happy to oblige the Count," he began, raising his head, "but unfortunately I have nothing at my disposal at present. I trust, however, you will be so good as to tell him when you write that neither my affection nor respect for him have diminished, and the only thing I hold against him is the fact that he is so rarely seen in Petersburg nowadays."

"Indeed I will, Sir," said Kalinovich, raising himself slightly in his seat.

"Mind you do!" the director repeated. "As regards yourself, now—all I could do would be to enter you in our lists as a non-paid clerk, at the same time informing you that you would be sharing the lot of nine or ten

young men, each one of them entitled to a paid appointment ahead of you, should anything fall vacant, since they entered the lists before you—I cannot therefore say when exactly your turn might come, and of course can promise nothing definite.”

As he uttered the last words, the director began to ease himself out of his chair.

Kalinovich rose, too.

“I cannot live without a salary, Your Excellency,” he said.

The director shrugged his shoulders.

Kalinovich began to take his leave.

“Glad to have made your acquaintance,” the director said, fixing his eye on a paper on the desk before him. And thus the interview was brought to a close.

Slowly, smiling in the bitterness of his heart, my hero descended the mosaic tiles of the staircase. The day was dull and rainy. Heavy clouds seemed to be leaning against the chimneys, and the *droshkies* were driving hither and thither, the drivers’ faces looking idiotic and soggy. Passers-by tripped along beneath their umbrellas. Right in the middle of the street, wrapped in matting, the jolly draymen sat in their carts, oblivious to all round them. The enormous windows of the five- and six-storeyed buildings—unfriendly, unassailable castles they seemed to Kalinovich—glared down on him.

“Ha! You feel secure and happy there, do you? Deaf to hunger and poverty knocking at your doors!” he whispered, clenching his fists, and before he knew it, he found himself leaning over the iron railings of Anichkov Bridge and gazing into the Fontanka. Great activities were going on there: washerwomen were rinsing linen from rafts; horses were being watered; water-carriers were filling their barrels; a boatman was rowing a uniformed clerk down the river; lean soldiers were wheeling great stones towards some enormous building; two Finns

with long poles were pushing off a barge loaded with logs. And Kalinovich envied all these people.

"Any muzhik, it would seem, so long as he is able to carry weights on his back like a beast of burden, is more welcome in Petersburg than a man who can think—and it isn't as if they had enough brains here, once and for all, for as a matter of fact it is only by means of low cunning, treachery and perseverance that they have made good here. How truly it has been said that, amidst all this tasteless luxury, these innumerable advertisements of entertainments which you may be sure in advance will not afford the faintest amusement, the only impression a thinking man gets is one of despair—hopeless blank despair! '*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate!*' That's what I would put up on the gates of this city for all honest beggars!" Having delivered himself of this soliloquy, Kalinovich went back to his room, scarcely conscious of the rain splashing against his face, creeping down the inside of his collar and soaking his new boots through and through.

V

Disappointment in his literary aspirations and his unsuccessful attempt to find a post in a government office—these two blows with which Petersburg greeted Kalinovich—proved, combined with the climate, to be more than he could bear: he fell ill of a nervous fever. During the first part of his illness, when he lay almost unconscious, he did not suffer so much, but with returning consciousness his mental condition became one of almost intolerable wretchedness. Instead of the luxurious life, the conspicuous social position, acquaintance with distinguished statesmen in search of a man of letters and a superior intelligence—here he was, in dark, damp lodgings, alone and bed-ridden. So as to have someone near

him, he was obliged to hire for a low wage a slovenly, ragged servant who, having evidently met with adversity in Petersburg himself, was sombre and uncongenial and seemed to find particular pleasure in disobeying or pretending not to understand the orders given him.

In his painful solitude my unfortunate hero could not help remembering his happy days of illness in the provincial town; early in the morning Pyotr Mikhailich would appear, racking his brains for stories to cheer him up, and muttering as he took his leave: "Nastya will be looking in after dinner, I suppose"—and of course she would come; and now—perhaps hundreds of the most charming women were passing his house in their fine carriages, without a single one of them so much as glancing up at his dark, unwashed windows! However, in a few days, from among the five hundred thousand men and women inhabiting the city, there emerged one kind soul, a neighbour of Kalinovich's, living on the floor above, a young German with sturdy legs, a disingenuous countenance, and a shock of hair that made him look oddly good-natured. Kalinovich had made his acquaintance before, at the restaurant where he sometimes dined, and the German had then struck him as too stupid to talk to. But the kind-hearted youth, when he learned of Kalinovich's illness, came one morning and, cautiously opening the door, just wide enough to give a glimpse of his tousled hair, asked:

"Are you ill?"

"Yes, I am. Do come in," Kalinovich answered in a feeble voice.

The German entered.

"I hope I don't intrude," he said, bowing modestly.

"Not at all, I'm very glad. Take a seat," said Kalinovich, who really was glad to see a fellow-mortal at last.

The German sat down rather stiffly and looked at him with unfeigned sympathy.

"Do you work anywhere?" asked Kalinovich after a minute or so.

"Yes, in the office of the merchant Eichman," the German answered.

"Do you get much?"

"Oh yes, I get a thousand a year."

"To think that this imbecile gets a thousand, and I nothing," thought Kalinovich, looking, not without envy, at the German's neat, fresh clothes, his snow-white shirt of the finest linen.

"Do you play cards?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," said the German.

"Let's play, and do come and see me every now and then, I'm dying of boredom!"

"I'll be very glad to, if it gives you any pleasure," replied the German.

"Are you free just now?"

"Yes, but as it's a holiday today, I thought I'd go for a walk on Nevsky Prospekt."

"Nevsky Prospekt be damned! Aren't you sick of it? Let's begin right away."

"All right," said the German, although he obviously had no wish to play at the moment.

"Bring over the table and cards," said Kalinovich to his servant.

The latter placed the table at the bedside and disappeared in his cubby-hole.

"Cards, you fool!"

The man appeared again.

"I don't know where they are," he declared.

"In the drawer, you beast, you brute, you!" shouted the sick man, almost crying with vexation.

The man cast a resentful look at him, but discovered the cards at last, and flung the pack on the table.

"Not knowing what to do with myself all this time,

I've been playing *grande-patience*, you see," said Kalinovich with a wry smile.

"What a shame!" said the German, and they began to play, the German showing himself to be but a poor hand at the game. Kalinovich, casting politeness to the winds, began chiding his guest from the very start. When obliged to pay a fine he would say: "People don't play like that—it isn't fair! Think of passing with such a hand!"

"Oh yes—sorry—to be sure!" the German would agree in utter simplicity, and immediately afterwards bid so crazily as to leave him short of three or even four tricks.

Kalinovich only shrugged his shoulders.

"You play like a madman!" he said with a scornful smile.

"Oh yes! That was a sad blunder of mine," his partner would at once agree.

In this way they played three whole rubbers. At last, after seven in the evening, the German rose to go.

"You're not going?" cried Kalinovich.

"I have to visit some friends," the German said, smiling.

"Come, now, don't go—why, what on earth am I to do? It's intolerable! Please don't go!"

"Very well, then," the German answered submissively, and stayed playing cards till two in the morning.

During the next few days Kalinovich, exerting all his powers of persuasion, took entire possession of his neighbour. Hardly had the latter come home from his work and finished his dinner when Kalinovich summoned him to his bedside and began dealing out the cards. The room was warm and the poor German sweated profusely, making the most piteous efforts to stifle his yawns; but he did not dare to go away, and it was only after some time that his lot was somewhat lightened for him, when Kalinovich, learning that his guest was fond of drinking, would sometimes send for a couple of bottles of beer.

But this only seemed to add to the German's embarrassment. As he poured out his third or fourth glass he usually asked: "Are you sure you don't mind?" And this ill-bred solicitude always irritated Kalinovich.

"Go on, drink—what do you mean?" he would answer peevishly.

After filling himself up with beer, the German became stupider than ever, and it would end every time in his losing three or four silver rubles. At first Kalinovich was amused by this, and though, of course, it was more the fact that the game left him no time to think his sad, painful thoughts than the actual gain, which attracted him to these pursuits, as a man of sense he did like to feel he was making money. However, after a month he became sick of cards, and the German with his artlessness and ignorance grew quite intolerable to him. In vain did Kalinovich try to get something out of him, talking to him of Germany, of the educational system there, of Germany's place in the world of politics: the German could not understand a thing. He roamed God's world, mild and contemplative as a child, and, what galled Kalinovich most of all, seemed perfectly happy. He had a few personal friends—Germans who were no doubt just as obtuse as himself; every holiday in the summer they either went fishing, taking nets with them and getting drunk every time, or hired horses and rode about the countryside. Besides these companions, the German knew several respectable families, went to parties at their homes, from which he always came home delighted.

"What do you do there?" Kalinovich once asked him.

"Do? We play lotto, dance; it's awfully jolly," the German answered.

"Were you ever in love? Is there no woman in your life?" Kalinovich went on, trying to get what he could out of the German.

The latter coloured and looked down.

"No," he said.

"How can that be? I should think you were about twenty-five, at least."

"I'm twenty-six. When I marry, I'll—but not now."

"The insensitive blockhead!" Kalinovich inwardly exclaimed, and was just about to turn his visitor out, saying he felt sleepy, when his servant entered.

"Ivolgin is here," he announced in his usual sepulchral tones.

"Who's Ivolgin?" asked Kalinovich peevishly, without troubling to lower his voice.

The man said nothing.

"Show him in, then," said Kalinovich.

The visitor entered. It was that same student who had so guilelessly pressed his friendship upon Kalinovich at the theatre. Kalinovich glowered at him.

"I dare say you don't recognize me," said the youth. His luxuriant locks were more dishevelled than ever, his necktie was awry, and there were three buttons missing from his coat.

"Yes, I do," said Kalinovich, pointing to the nearest chair.

The student sat down, assuming a nonchalant pose.

"Of course," he began breezily, "I would long ago have made use of your kind permission to call on you, if it hadn't been for a mistake I must have made about your address. As a matter of fact I went to nine or ten houses before I found you."

"You might have spared yourself the trouble," thought Kalinovich.

"But I must say you have changed since then," the student went on.

"I'm ill," Kalinovich answered brusquely.

"How very unfortunate!" the student exclaimed, and looked as if he meant it. "And I had thought of asking a favour of you—" he added, avoiding Kalinovich's eyes.

Kalinovich said nothing.

"You were discussing Karatigin and the art of acting with that Mr.—what's his name?"

"Belavin."

"That's right, Belavin. A man of superior intelligence it would seem. I should very much like to make his acquaintance."

"I don't suppose he shares your desire," thought Kalinovich.

"I did not like to thrust myself upon him then," the student went on, "but you see I am madly devoted to the theatre, and this passion of mine, which I have entertained ever since my childhood, constitutes both my greatest happiness and my greatest misfortune."

"Why misfortune?" asked Kalinovich.

The student smiled bitterly.

"Because," he answered in a voice fraught with irony, "I am the son of a very rich man, who happens also to be a lieutenant-general, and who says that it is a disgrace for a gentleman to be an actor."

"To think that there should be fools in the world who consider it a misfortune to have a rich general for their father," thought Kalinovich.

"And do you mean to become an actor?" he said aloud.

"Yes, I have almost made up my mind," the young man answered, "I consider my father's ideas utterly fallacious. In my opinion, if you, for instance, a gentleman, can be a writer, why cannot I be a gentleman and an actor—don't you agree?"

"There is no disgrace in being an actor, to be sure, but there is a difference in the two occupations."

"What's the difference? Art is a great leveller. The writer is an artist, and the actor is an artist."

"A great and essential difference; the work of one is free and original, while that of the other is dependent. They stand in the same relation to one another as the

composer and performer; one creates, the other merely assimilates, interprets," said Kalinovich.

"But do not actors create just as freely? Each one treats a certain part in his own way, entirely differently from the other, don't you agree?" said the student, turning to the German.

"Yes, that is so," the German answered.

"That's not what I meant," said Kalinovich reluctantly, and, not trusting the intelligence of his companions, did not pursue his point and fell silent.

"But do tell me," the student went on, "do you agree with Mr. Belavin's estimate of Karatigin?"

"Everyone agrees with that," said Kalinovich with a slight smile.

The student shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know; I for one have always considered and still consider Karatigin one of the greatest tragic actors and, it goes without saying, have unconsciously imitated him, although of course I always strive to do something original, something on my own," he said.

"You have chosen the field of pure drama, I presume."

"Yes, Sir! And that is the reason why I have chosen Shakespeare to test my abilities by. I've been working at him for over a month, and I think I have achieved something."

"What is your method of work?" asked Kalinovich, secretly scornful.

"I usually do this: I lock myself into my room, stand in front of the mirror, and begin studying."

"And misses all the lectures at the university, the fool!" thought Kalinovich.

"What year are you in at the university?" he asked aloud.

"My second," the student answered carelessly, "and I don't suppose I'll go on," he added. "Let my father withhold his blessing, and his hundred-thousand-ruble

legacy, as he threatens to do; that will not stop me, if in the end I find I can render Hamlet as I visualize him."

"What a fool!" Kalinovich thought, mentally apostrophizing him. "The part of Hamlet is very difficult and requires great finesse, doesn't it?" he said.

"Extremely difficult," the youth agreed, "but I may tell you frankly that I am in thorough sympathy with it, for my own position is not so very different from that of Hamlet's. My father contracted a most unfortunate passion for our former governess, a fondness which made our mother very unhappy and may have been the cause of her death, and which makes all of us unhappy, me personally most of all, for as the eldest son I feel I ought to wreak vengeance on the woman, and yet I cannot, for I still love and venerate my father."

"He must blurt out all the family secrets, the swine!" thought Kalinovich.

"Because of my vocation," the student went on, "and because I will not dance to their tune and enter the army, they all think I'm mad, as Hamlet's relatives did. And that being the case, it seems to me I ought to be able to play the part with feeling; the only thing that holds me back is that I have no friends who love and understand acting. One cannot trust to one's own judgement, so I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind hearing me—I even brought the book with me—if only you'll allow me to—"

"Since you wish it, but I'm a poor judge," replied Kalinovich, cursing in his heart the visitor and his passion for the theatre.

"You're an excellent judge," said the young man, rising in his seat and producing from his pocket Polevoi's translation of *Hamlet*.

"Would you be so kind as to read the king's and queen's parts?" he added, turning to the German.

"Certainly, only I read Russian very badly," he answered.

"That doesn't matter—please do!" the young man exclaimed, immediately falling into the lovelorn attitude of Hamlet in the first act. "Come on, now!" he said to the German, who, finding the place with some difficulty, read out:

"But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—"

"A little more than kin and less than kind," the young man uttered with a sad smile.

"How is it that the clouds still hang on you?" read the German.

"Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun," replied Hamlet, derisive, melancholy.

"Do not, for ever, with thy veiled lids,

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know'st, 'tis common; all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity," replied the German.

"Ay, madam, it is common," the student agreed pointedly.

"If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?" countered the queen.

"Seems, madam, nay, it is! I know not seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,

That can denote me truly."

"Sorry!" said the young man with a shrug of the shoulders and then, addressing the German, added in his ordinary voice: "How d'you like it?"

"Very much," said the German.

Kalinovich's face was glum and he looked persistently away. But the youth noticed nothing.

"This isn't the best—because of the interruptions. Let me read his famous 'To be or not to be,'" he gabbled, and disappearing behind the door for a moment, emerged dreadfully sad and melancholy, and began:

*"To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die,—to sleep,—"*

"No, no, this won't do, it's much too cold; not enough feeling, is there?" he asked the German.

"Yes, it is cold," the German agreed.

"That's it—cold," the actor repeated. "But let me read you another bit, something with true passion," he added as hastily as before, and once more orated.

*"O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon' gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! Ah, fie 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature,
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two;
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't;—frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month; or ere those shoes were old,*

*With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she,—
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourned longer,—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules!*" declared the tragedian with gusto. "Is it good, do tell me, now? Is the delivery perfect, or ought I to work on it still?"

This time he made a direct appeal to Kalinovich.

"It's good," said Kalinovich, crying inwardly: "Oh, God!"

"Do you really think so?" the young man asked, his eyes gleaming with pleasure. "Oh, but there's another bit, still better! May I?" he added, and striking a theatrical attitude, declaimed:

*"Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wanned;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!*

*What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears."*

The last words were uttered with such vehemence that the landlady, who happened to be passing, grew alarmed, and opening the door, asked:

"For goodness' sake, what is the matter?"

"Nothing," answered Kalinovich, and unable to restrain himself any longer, burst out into hearty laughter.

The youth seemed abashed.

"There's something wrong—I can feel it myself—don't you think so?"

"Oh no, it's all right," said Kalinovich. "What's the time, I wonder?" he said, turning with a yawn to the German.

"Nine o'clock, and by your leave, I must go: I have another visit to make tonight," the German answered, getting to his feet.

"I will not detain you," said Kalinovich, yawning once more, this time deliberately.

The student understood it was time to take himself off.

"I will not intrude upon you any longer, either," he said, picking up his cap, "but if you had the patience to hear me another time, when I'm in better form—"

"With pleasure," Kalinovich answered curtly, but when his guests left he was almost beside himself with bitter resentment.

"To think," he exclaimed, "that in the whole of Petersburg I should find no one but these two fools, whose company in a month's time would make me as stupid as a log myself! No, no!" he ended up, and summoning his man, ordered him never to let the student in, making his mind up at the same time never to invite the German again. The latter for his part seemed to be quite content with this, and never again put in an appearance.

VI

For almost a week after this my hero remained entirely alone and spent most of his time thinking of Nastenka. These lonely recollections restored in his mind's eye the picture of his love in all its infinitesimal and blissful details. Reserved and self-sufficient as he was by nature,

he now experienced an intolerable longing for a heart-to-heart talk with someone, to speak of his love, not to boast of it, of course, but merely to analyze his own feelings and discuss those problems, mainly ethical, which were worrying him at present. Mentally surveying the list of his acquaintances, Kalinovich could not help dwelling on Belavin. "*There's* a man I could talk to and unbosom myself to!" he thought, and, by no means certain that he would come, nevertheless wrote him a note in which, pleading ill health, he excused himself for not having called, and begged Belavin to be a true Christian and visit him—victim of illness, loneliness and boredom that he was. By way of answer, on the evening of the same day the familiar voice was heard from the hall, asking:

"Is your master in?"

Kalinovich felt his heart leap. Yes, it was Belavin himself, walking into the room with his slightly swaying gait.

"How d'you do," he said, putting out his hand in cordial welcome.

"I am so grateful to you," said Kalinovich, his voice ringing with the sincere gratitude he felt.

"What's this—the usual tribute to Petersburg, eh?" said Belavin, sitting down and leaning on his gold-topped cane.

"Indeed, Petersburg has been none too kind to me, either in the physical or the spiritual sense of the word," said Kalinovich.

"Whom has it ever treated with kindness? A city without so much as a whiff of fresh air, without religion, history, nationality!" said Belavin with a sigh. "But tell me about yourself," he went on, "you were about to see a certain gentleman, I remember—what did you make of him?"

Kalinovich smiled.

"The gentleman, so it seems to me, must be the very essence of official bureaucracy, with all spiritual feeling in him killed."

"I don't suppose there was ever much to kill. However, he's not the worst of the lot, not by a long way."

"Bad enough, I should think, and not to be found in any other place."

"That's just it. Not only the mind, but the entire organism has to be bred on this soil, for several generations before such a blossom, such a nosegay can be grown—wonderfull—all that would make the simplest human being, let alone anyone with refinement, feel derision, anger, and vexation, is pure bliss to such a one. Knowing full well, for instance, that there is nothing fruitful, no life in their activities, for they either skim over the surface of life or trample upon it, they nevertheless clothe themselves gloriously in their own emptiness of soul, and think no one has an inkling of what they really are. It's quite incredible, quite incredible!"

"As a matter of fact," said Kalinovich, "the gentleman recommended me to go to the provinces, where there would be greater scope for my activities, saying there was nothing to do here!"

"Now isn't that charming—this artless recognition of facts!" cried Belavin, bursting out laughing. "And he's right, the scoundrell! For the first time in his life, perhaps, all unwittingly, he has stated a great truth, for over there, however tortuously and painfully, some sort of work does get done, whereas here there is nothing but incessant scribbling—wonderfull! So you have no job in a government department?" he added after a slight pause.

"No, I haven't," said Kalinovich.

"And a good thing, too, believe me!" Belavin exclaimed. "You may say what you will, but I regard the entire institution as a kind of mysterious goddess, to whom hundreds of youthful brains are sacrificed yearly and in

whose name people are driven to utter destruction and ruin. If they didn't rake you in, it only means there are enough victims on her altar at present—the quota is complete! Now, tell me, are you going on with your writing?"

"No," answered Kalinovich.

"That's too bad, too bad," said Belavin.

"What can I do?" replied Kalinovich. "It's chiefly I who suffer from it, of course, for I had placed all my hopes on literature, and it was for these ephemeral hopes that I strangled every human sensation within me, every motion of the heart. To tell you the truth, in coming here I abandoned a woman for whom I constituted the world; and such ties are not easily snapped, even as regards the conscience alone."

"Yes, of course," Belavin acquiesced, "and altogether," he went on, "since one is forbidden to think, it is far better to give oneself up to feeling, however limited and trite. Old bachelor and lone dog that I am, I have grown to regard with belated compassion those simple *patresfamilias* living within their magic circle, insensitive to everything that happens outside the circle save when it touches either themselves or those belonging to them—who are in fact no more than extensions of their personalities. The very fact of their demands on life being so much more limited makes their chance of getting satisfaction out of life the greater. Truly they are enviable!"

"Yes, but it is not everyone who can limit himself like that," said Kalinovich. "Not to mention the material, or rather, the financial aspect, there is such a thing as moral entanglements."

"What are moral entanglements, after all?" cried Belavin. "Time smooths them all out, adjusts them, makes everything come right."

"I don't know that one can count on time doing all that!" Kalinovich interrupted. "Take my case, for instance,"

he went on with a smile. "Having attained a certain stage of intellectual development, one cannot, at least not for any length of time, deceive oneself as to the nature of one's feelings. I realized that though I loved a girl as much as I was capable of loving, literary and social interests, and finally my ambition, not to mention the coarser and more selfish cravings—all this lived within me, moved me deeply. I ask you: how was I to make up my mind to sacrifice it all, and content myself for the rest of my life with the sensation of love, which was far from filling up my entire heart? And yet I can't help suffering."

Belavin listened to Kalinovich, watching him from his intelligent, steady eyes. He saw his host was longing to ask him something and was restraining himself with difficulty.

"And what is it that makes you suffer?" he asked.

"Well, naturally, it is about this girl—was it very wicked of me to abandon her?" Kalinovich said, getting nearer the point.

Belavin smiled, and leaning on his cane, sat thinking for a while.

"They talk and write a great deal about this sort of thing nowadays," he began. "And of course, if the woman fell in love with you herself, of her own accord, without any encouragement on your side—why, of course nobody's to blame—you're perfectly free, though I must add I have known persons of such fine perceptions that even in a case like that they control their natures and become real martyrs to their delicate sense of moral obligation."

"And that, perfectly imaginary, invented by themselves," put in Kalinovich.

"Well, yes, in a way," Belavin answered. "But the point is," he went on, "that the emancipation of woman has put this problem in the foreground because we, the majority of us at least, are apt like Pilate to wash our

hands of all blame, time after time. When a woman cherishes a serious feeling for a man, it is almost always the result of seduction, of false expectations having been raised in her, promises held out—and in these cases of course, thank God, we're not pagans: we cannot allow Eros to write his oaths in water. To trifle with another's passions is just as bad as spending money which does not belong to you."

"You mentioned seduction—but is there anyone nowadays who would dare to play the Lovelace?" replied Kalinovich. "Take my case, now—I was carried away, and I did not conceal it, but then, when I was able to estimate my own feelings at what they were worth, I saw that they lacked—"

"What did they lack, after all?" asked Belavin, his eyes becoming keener still.

"Well, they lacked that which would have enabled me to marry her," he answered, after some hesitation.

Belavin fell thoughtful again.

"Marry!" he echoed. "Well! If your circumstances or a kind of moral diffidence won't allow you to marry her, why can't you just love her?"

"What d'you mean—just love her?" cried Kalinovich. "It sounds a little too chivalrous, it's altogether quixotic, this unsubstantial, formless love."

"Quixotic!" Belavin repeated, shaking his head sadly. "I wish you wouldn't say that. It is a shame that you, a writer, should support this deadening theory according to which anything that does not serve one's immediate need is dubbed quixotry. Believe me, your generation is doomed to a sterile existence, for it has lost every shred of romanticism—that universal romanticism which, on the one hand, found its expression in sentimentalism, and on the other, made itself heard in the poetry of Byron and uttered its final word in the discovery of steam. Yes, Sir, it was not your commerce, that swindler of humanity

now reaping the harvest, which created and invented the locomotive and the screw: they were the creations of scientific romanticism. You smile? But didn't it all begin, not in the head even of the clever engineer who made practical application of the discovery, but in the crazy theories of the alchemists. No, but really! I am appalled when I think of the young people of today!" he went on, warming to his subject. "What is it, after all, that gives savour to their lives? Lust and money! In their eyes woman doesn't exist in any other form than that of a rich heiress or a prostitute—isn't it terrible? And I can still remember the generation of our fathers and uncles, who in comparison with us were veritable athletes, who were fond of their bottle and all that, and who, by the aid of a little romanticism grafted on their natures, went on loving a woman they had not seen for over ten years without the *slightest feeling of shame*, feeding their passion on correspondence alone."

These last words evoked another smile from Kalinovich.

"I regard such romanticism *à la Sterne*," he replied, "in an entirely different light. In my opinion it is based on the complete absence of passion. The very ability to be satisfied with letter-writing shows a kind of moral deficiency, for, say what you will, these eternal letters can only result in irritation and by no means bring satisfaction to a normal, not over-refined nature."

"Why irritation? You confuse sentiment with sensuality," said Belavin.

"But how on earth can one separate the two, soul and body, especially when it comes to love? It's like the roots and the earth; the roots hold on to the earth, and the earth clings to the roots; it is precisely because I do not wish to grieve the girl that I deny myself the pleasure of corresponding with her."

"Aren't you straining at a gnat after having swallowed

a fly? Don't you think you are merely excusing your own reluctance to write?" said Belavin, smiling.

"Not at all, I find it hard not to write," rejoined Kalinovich. "I live in a kind of arid desert, thirsting with my whole heart; I know where there is a cool spring which would quench my thirst, and abstain from approaching it, all because of this blessed habit of analyzing everything, a habit which, worm-like, gnaws and devours all feelings, all joys, the moment they show themselves, and which really constitutes one of man's greatest evils."

Again Belavin smiled.

"Certainly," he said, "while there is a great deal of good in this habit, there is also a great deal of evil; it nearly ruined philosophy, which even Hegel hardly managed to pull out of the slough; as for the other branches of knowledge, they've gone completely awry. Everything centres round details, now; the whole has disappeared entirely, and how it will all end, God alone knows—it's extraordinary!"

"It will end in great discoveries, no doubt."

"Very likely; but they'll all be trivial and sterile, for, believe me, all that is great and good and useful for man has been arrived at by means of synthesis."

"With the aid of scientific romanticism?" said Kalinovich, smiling.

"Precisely," said Belavin, rising. "And now I must wish you good night."

"Must you go?"

"Yes, I haunt the Italian opera. Good-bye!"

"From all that we have said," Kalinovich summed up as he accompanied his guest to the door, "the conclusion might be drawn that the gentleman we mentioned at the beginning must be one of the greatest romanticists."

"How's that?"

"Why, from his utter lack of analytical power—of which I don't suppose he has a drop in his body."

Belavin rocked with laughter.

"On the contrary!" he cried. "These people are capable of analyzing and are even endowed with the barren gift of logic, laying down premises and drawing conclusions, better, perhaps, than anyone else; but their scale is so large that any unsavoury action, when measured by it, seems trivial, paltry, unworthy of notice. But I really *must* go, *au revoir!*" concluded Belavin.

This talk left Kalinovich in an extremely sentimental mood. He immediately sat down and wrote a letter to Nastenka.

"My dear and only friend," he wrote, "my first words are: forgive me for not letting you hear from me before; I had the best of reasons for that: I meant never to write to you at all, for, leaving your town, I had made up my mind to cast you off, desert you, fling you away—call it what you will, and all I can say in my own justification is that in acting as a liar and deceiver I was not a feather-brained, empty youngster, but a person who deeply realized the black villainy of what he was doing, who shed tears of blood over the deed and yet could not have acted differently. Of the two evils, I reasoned, I had chosen the lesser for you: neither the despair of disappointed love, nor the grief of your relatives, nor yet the scandal which in all probability is being spread around you by now, could equal the torments to which you would have been subjected if I had remained by your side and married you. I would have broken your heart with my unjust remorse, unavailing lamentations and, who knows, perhaps my hatred for you. There you are! I was not born for love in a cottage. Ambition seems to dwell in my heart in the place of all other feelings, as if the ancient Roman lived again in me. *In forum*, on the tribune, only there, have I dreamed all my life of living, ambition alone reigns in my soul. I remember myself as a little

child, when I was being sent away to school, and everyone, from my dying mother to the servant, was weeping round me. I alone remained dry-eyed, and all I felt was annoyance with their foolishness. Repeated failures have not killed this passion in me, they have merely served to strengthen it, to intensify it, to make it more resilient. It was under the influence of this passion that I left you, my only treasure, though God knows that hundreds of men from whom you could have chosen a kind-hearted, loving husband—a hundred such, I say, could never have loved you as much as I do. But though I doomed myself deliberately to this fate, I find myself unequal to it; and here I am, in Petersburg, all my hopes shattered, sick and perhaps dying, despair in my heart, without a penny to bless myself with, writing these lines to you to beg you to give me back your love. Do not hope to become my wife, nor yet even to see me, for I am firmly resolved to stick to this foul Petersburg of mine; but do go on loving me, and write to me! This is the only luxury we may allow ourselves. You will understand, I am sure, all I have meant to say here, and once more will stretch the hand of friendship to the victim of egoism who is

"Your Kalinovich."

Kalinovich was perfectly sincere in the writing of this letter. He wrote with no secret desire of making himself interesting, but simply because he longed to write to Nastenka, because at the moment of writing he sincerely loved her.

VII

After sending the letter to Nastenka, Kalinovich gave himself up to suspense. Emaciated, with melancholy stamped on his features, he roamed the streets of Petersburg oblivious of ambition, poverty, the horrors of the

future. He had only one thought—when would the postman bring him the long-expected letter? One morning, he lolled idly over the window-sill of his furnished lodging, staring with blank and idle curiosity into the street, where the most ordinary scenes were being enacted. The yardman from the house opposite, in a print shirt and a knitted jacket, was lazily sweeping the road. An untidy girl, a coffee-pot in her hand, ran out of a ground-floor apartment with red curtains in the windows, and into the next door tavern for water. Then came a funeral with torch-bearers, priests walking in front, and carriages, through the windows of which could be discerned black bonnets and white weepers, bringing up the rear. A fish pedlar, going up and down the streets balancing a tray on his head, turned from side to side, crying: "Salmon all alive-o!" while another paced up and down the pavements, calling out in a resonant tenor, as if intoning the responses: "Fresh cucumbers!" All this was so nauseatingly familiar that Kalinovich spat with vexation, missing by an inch the hat of a passing clerk. But now came a cab, the passenger in which appeared to be a young lady in a most unbecoming hat. She asked something of a water-carrier staggering under the weight of his barrel. The latter pointed to the gate in reply and the *droshky* drew up. Kalinovich felt an immense relief and drew his breath more easily, as if suddenly finding himself in another atmosphere. Scarcely realizing what had come over him, he lay down on the sofa and, strange to say, for some unknown reason, began to listen. All his blood seemed to have rushed to his heart. Steps were heard in the passage, the door opened, a familiar voice was heard. . . . Kalinovich leaped to his feet. The incomprehensible foreboding had not deceived him—into the room walked Nastenka.

"Here I am," she said.

Kalinovich rushed towards her like a madman, seizing

her hand, stroking it, as if anxious to assure himself that she was not a ghost; and then followed one of those unexpected joyous meetings when the heart is too full for words. Kalinovich could do nothing but gaze at Nastenka, who took off her cloak and hat as in a dream and flung them down.

"How did you get here?" he said at last, taking her hand.

"You're glad to see me, my friend, aren't you? But how thin you are! What's the matter? Why didn't you send for me before?" she said, looking intently into his face.

"Glad!" cried Kalinovich, sinking on to the sofa and drawing her towards him. "Heavens!" And with his head in his hands, he sobbed.

"What's this, my friend—you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Stop, now!" she said, drying his eyes with her handkerchief.

"What made you come? Oh, heavens!" repeated Kalinovich.

"I came at once. You wrote you were ill. I told my father, and left."

"And your father—tell me!"

"He is ill, poor thing, pity him! He has had a stroke," replied Nastenka, her voice trembling.

"Has he really!" cried Kalinovich, still unable to come to himself. Happy as he was at Nastenka's arrival, the hateful question stirred in the depths of his heart: "What are we going to live on?"

"Come now, send someone to take my things from the *droshky*! Have you anyone to send?" continued Nastenka.

"Oh yes! Hi, Fyodor!" cried Kalinovich.

Fyodor of course did not respond to the first summons.

"Where are you, blockhead?" shouted Kalinovich. "Go and bring the things from the *droshky* at once!"

Muttering angrily, Fyodor went out.

"You shouldn't swear at him!" said Nastenka.

Kalinovich smiled bitterly.

"If you knew, my own, what I have had to put up with from that swine in my illness!" he said.

"I do know, but everything will be all right now. I will look after you myself," said Nastenka, pressing him to her bosom.

Fyodor brought in three bundles, constituting the whole of Nastenka's luggage.

"Look what a lot of money I've brought you, my friend!" she said, and she sprang up and drew a small casket out of one of the bundles, which she unlocked and showed him. It contained about two thousand rubles in silver.

"Why, you mad creature! What money is this?" he asked.

"Never you mind!" she told him. "But I'm ever so tired and hungry! Why don't you order tea for me?"

"Fyodor! The samovar, and quick about it!" cried Kalinovich, once more drawing Nastenka to him, and then, making her sit down beside him, he put his arms round her and began kissing her.

Tears filled his eyes again.

"You've become simply hysterical. Why, I'm here, now! What is there to cry about?" said Nastenka.

Fyodor brought in a dingy-looking samovar and two chipped and grubby cups.

"Stop crying, now, I want tea! Don't you?" she added.

"Yes, pour me out some. It's ages since you poured out my tea," he said.

"Ages, my friend!" agreed Nastenka, and kissing him again, she sat down before the samovar. "Oh, what horrid cups!" she said, carefully washing them. "And, oh, *cher ami*, look how dirty and horrid your room is! There won't be any of that now that I've come. I'll put everything in order."

"I had other things to think about," apologized Kalinovich. "I believed I was dying."

"Don't you dare to say that again! Now you must be happy, you must be just as much of a dandy as you were when I first met you. I insist on that," declared Nastenka, and having finished her tea, she again sat down beside him. "Come, tell me how you've been getting on in Petersburg without me! Have you been unfaithful to me, I wonder!"

"I had other things to think about," he repeated, trying to conceal, with a hypocritical sigh, the quaver in his voice.

"I know you will never be unfaithful to me, my friend, but just the same I've felt like pinching your ear till it hurt," said Nastenka, tweaking it gently. "Getting all sorts of ideas into your head, and never a line, falling ill, and never letting us know...."

"Come, forgive me," said Kalinovich, kissing her hand.

"Forgive you? And are you aware that you almost drove me to suicide?"

Kalinovich looked at her.

"Oh, nonsense!" he said.

"No, it wasn't! If you can say that, it means you don't understand my nature, or how I love you," retorted Nastenka. "When you went away I thought I should live on your letters. And then a month passed, two months, three months ... at last almost six months, and not a word. I could only suppose you were dead. I asked everyone, read the papers and magazines in the hope of coming across your name—but never a word. Then the Count came to town. Dead to shame, I went to him, I begged him almost on my knees to tell me if he knew anything about you. 'I know nothing,' says he."

Kalinovich listened with bowed head.

"I was absolutely ready to lay hands on myself," continued Nastenka. "For, I thought to myself, if he is

dead, what is there left for me? What should I have to live for? Better make an end of myself! But it looks as if God did not wish me to die and inspired me with the idea and desire to receive communion. So I fasted and went to confess to Father Serafim—remember? The Father Superior at the monastery. I told him all, how you had loved me and left me, and now you were dead, and I had made up my mind to commit suicide."

Kalinovich smiled faintly and shook his head.

"And what did he say to you?" he asked.

"He said to me: 'Earthly ties are strong in you, but have you ever loved God, have you ever thought of Him, mad girl?' I stood there like one condemned, and at that terrible moment, when I went back over my whole life, I began to fear for myself. 'Has your depraved heart turned to stone?' he asked. 'Have you no fear of the Lord, of the terrible judge reigning in thunder and glory? Pray!' he said, 'pray till you sweat blood!' Oh, my friend, a kind of spiritual anguish, horror overcame me! You know how sometimes, before the altar, you wait for divine fire to come and scorch your unworthiness. I flung out my hands and fell on my knees, and I really did pray. I cried my heart out. 'I will now give you a penance to do,' he said. 'And when I see that your soul has become enlightened, I will give you communion.' And he went on speaking to me about God, about man's destiny, till he really did wake in me a feeling of religion. I understood then, as he said, that we can only fight and conquer on the arena of our passions when we take for our weapon the love of God."

Kalinovich smiled again, listening to Nastenka as a mother listens to the charming prattling of her child. She noticed this at last.

"You laugh? I nearly died, and he laughs! Is that right, my friend?" she said, tears in her eyes.

"It wasn't that," he murmured, kissing her hand.

"I know what you were laughing at," exclaimed Nastenka. "And God will punish you for it, Jacques! You are dissatisfied with life now, you are unhappy, but later on you will feel still worse—believe me! God will punish you on my account too, for before I met you I was a good girl. And now these doubts, these sneers—what's the good of them? As Father Serafim says: 'The heart hardens, the mind is not enlightened. We can only build our spiritual edifice on the corner-stone of faith, on the fear, the love of God.'"

Kalinovich looked hard at a corner of the room.

"Do not kill the strength in me which this holy man has given me."

"Very well," interrupted Kalinovich. "But now tell me how long your father has been ill."

Nastenka sighed and answered:

"Ever since you left. He grieved terribly for you. And then, you know, he could see my desperate situation. You should have seen us—it was something terrible! We all thought of nothing but you, but we never mentioned you among ourselves. And then, one night they waked me up and told me my father had had a stroke. If I had not then had firm religion in my soul I would of course have resolved on suicide again, for it was obvious that I had murdered my father. But I looked upon it as another ordeal, and decided to renounce the world and tend my father. And he, my dear one, seemed to understand this. He would never let anyone but me give him his medicine or change his linen."

"How was it that he let you go?" asked Kalinovich, looking at her steadily.

Nastenka gave a gesture of despair.

"Better not ask!" she said. "When I got your letter with all that nonsense about leaving me, I didn't believe it, of course, I knew very well that this would never be. I understood only one thing—that you were ill. And there

was an upheaval in my soul. My father, my vow—all was forgotten, and I immediately resolved to go to you at all costs."

Kalinovich smiled faintly.

"And what about Father Serafim, how did he regard that?" he asked.

Nastenka laughed now.

"Father Serafim! As if I would dare to confide such intentions to him. I made all my preparations very quietly and just left. When I think about it I hardly recognize myself. What *is* this love I feel for you? It's as if you had some supernatural power over me. Is it a sin? Why, it seems as if sin could not exist for me in relation to you. I think if anyone had utterly convinced me that I was doomed to eternal tortures for my love for you, I wouldn't have been afraid, I would have taken exactly the same decision. And this time it was against my father, and say what you will," she continued, becoming more and more agitated, "I love him dearly! But when it's a matter of your welfare I feel no pity for him. When I decided to go to you—oh, heavens, the lies I told! He is unable to read, so the first thing I did was to write a letter as if from you, saying that you had been ill all the time and therefore had not written, and that now you were better and wanted me to go to you to be married, for you were unable to come yourself on account of your work on the magazine—in a word, I invented a whole story. . . . And I took in Pelageya Evgrafovna, too. I led her quietly to my room and threw myself on my knees before her. 'Dearest Pelageya Evgrafovna,' I said, 'do not agitate Papa, do not dissuade him! Perhaps you yourself love someone, and how would you feel if he were ill, far away from you? Why, I believe you'd go to him on foot.' At last I won her over."

Kalinovich shook his head.

"And the Captain?" he asked.

"Oh, my dear, I had ever so much trouble with the Captain!" replied Nastenka. "The first few days he did nothing but sulk. And I thought that would be the end of it, and that, as usual, he would hold his tongue. And then he suddenly came to me and said to me in his stuttering way, you know, that there I was, going away, and my father at death's door, and whom was I leaving him to? He fairly tortured me, I tell you, I didn't know what to do. And at last he said outright that you would deceive me again, that when you were here you were making up to Paulina and the Count's daughter, and that you had only gone to Petersburg because everyone had refused you. This I couldn't stand, and I burst out: 'Don't you dare,' I said, 'speak to me about that man, Uncle, for you cannot understand him! And as for me,' I said, 'your love for me does not entitle you to torment me! If I leave my dying father,' I said, 'it doesn't mean it's easy for me, and you, instead of giving me support and comfort in my terrible plight, make things still harder for me, and try to make me distrust the person for whom I am sacrificing all!' And then, you know, I wept bitterly. But even then he had no pity on me and went to my father, and suggested that if I did intend to go I should take him with me as a protection against you. You can imagine what I, with my sensitive pride, must have felt! I sent a message to him through the servants that though I was only a girl, still I was twenty-three years old, and had no need of a chaperon, and could not have afforded one. And in the end I left almost without saying good-bye to him."

Kalinovich shook his head again.

"Why did you do that? He loves you," he said.

"Very likely," sighed Nastenka. "But he's so stubborn. Just think—he did nothing to help me on my way, and I had to do all the preparations for the journey myself. First of all, money had to be obtained. I knew very well

you hadn't much, and how was I to come to you without a penny? I decided to mortgage the estate—I told my father, and he consented. But they told me it would take some time. 'Good heavens!' think I. 'What's to be done?' I was so worked up that I simply had to go to you, whatever happened. I decided to borrow from the post-master, but you never saw such a stingy man in your life. I went to him every day for a week. At last he agreed, but for terrific interest—it was explained to me afterwards. At last, all my papers were ready. Rumyantsev, the good soul, helped me a lot, I sent him about everywhere. When I went to him for the money he began counting it out, and fancy, he trembled, and there were tears in his eyes! 'Do not deceive me!' he said, and he actually cried."

Here Nastenka stopped in exhaustion for some moments.

"And then the farewells and the partings began," she resumed her tale. "My father was only upheld by my promise to visit him in the autumn with you. And we will, won't we, my friend? That will be my only consolation for having taken such a selfish step."

Kalinovich seemed thoughtful.

"And how did you come? Didn't you even bring a maid?" he asked, as if anxious to change the conversation by not replying to Nastenka's last words.

"No. But I travelled with a lady from the country, an awful fool; you can imagine my impatience to get here as soon as possible, and she was afraid of everything. As soon as dark fell we stayed the night and went no further. I couldn't eat a thing, but she gobbled for two. And how she snored! Then a wheel broke: the driver was insolent, and when we did get to Moscow I was all alone. Didn't know a soul. Awful! Then I went by train. I took a third-class ticket for the sake of economy, and fancy, I was all alone in a carriage full of muzhiks! The stink

of their sheepskins was appalling! And there was a drunkard who began making up to me. Night fell. Horrors, I tell you! When I got out of the train I fairly crossed myself. 'Heavens!' I thought, 'can it be that I shall be alone no longer, that I shall soon see my friend, my beloved!' Oh, how I love you!"

With these last words Nastenka twined her arms round Kalinovich and pressed him to her. He kissed her with an air of thoughtfulness.

"One shouldn't love like that," he said.

"Why not?" she asked.

"One shouldn't," and once more his eyes were filled with tears.

VIII

At first Nastenka brought utter bliss into Kalinovich's life. He completely recovered his health and his clothes showed all his former spruceness and correctness. The dirty lodgings were exchanged for a small, but bright and clean apartment, which they furnished very nicely. At first the idea of marriage haunted Nastenka, but she did not like to demand it, or even mention it, and Kalinovich said not a word. To console her father she wrote that she was married, and purposely showed Kalinovich this letter.

"Look what I have written, my friend," she said, smiling.

"Quite right!" he replied, also smiling, and there the matter ended.

Amidst the freedom of morals in the capital their position excited neither comments nor disapproval, the more that they lived in almost complete solitude. Their only visitors were Belavin and the young student Ivolgin. It was Kalinovich himself who invited Belavin, saying to Nastenka: "I want to introduce my friend Belavin to

you—a very clever man. I'll go and see him today, and he'll probably look in one evening." They had never had guests before, and Nastenka felt rather shy.

"I won't appear," she said, "I should feel awkward. Say what you like, but our relations, you know. . . . I'll sit behind the screen and listen to you two clever men talking."

"What nonsense! How could you feel awkward in the presence of such an advanced, delicate-minded man?" retorted Kalinovich, going out.

Kalinovich called on Belavin that very morning, and found him lolling luxuriously in a high-backed arm-chair. Three walls of his study were lined with bookcases, topped by marble busts of famous men. The table beside him was littered with magazines and newspapers. Either from want of anything better to do, or because he found the occupation amusing, he had been teasing with a whip a beautiful Newfoundlander with eyes, I assure you, more intelligent than many human beings'; as if understanding what was said, the dog growled good-humouredly, now trying in vain to catch at the end of the lash with its terrible jaws, now throwing itself on the soft carpet where it rolled gracefully from side to side.

"Good morning!" said Belavin in his friendly voice, when Kalinovich entered, and after they had exchanged the usual complaints of the Petersburg weather, Kalinovich said:

"I've moved to another apartment."

"Ah!" said Belavin.

"The person of whom we spoke has come to me," went on Kalinovich, smiling and looking down.

"Ah," said Belavin once more, and he, too, lowered his eyes. "Glad to hear it," he added.

Kalinovich declared, with a visible effort, that he would like to introduce Belavin to her, and would beg him to spare them an evening.

"Certainly! Today if it suits you," replied Belavin.

They conversed for half an hour on various topics, among which the host mentioned a weighty article in some magazine, making his usual subtle analysis and finding in it nothing either new or important. "The intellectual poverty is incredible!" he exclaimed.

"Incredible!" echoed Kalinovich.

He then took his leave and went back to his Nastenka, and Belavin called his servant and ordered his carriage, intending to drive up and down Nevsky Prospekt for an hour or two before going to dine at the English Club. These two men whom we have just seen together may strike the reader as a curious couple. Belavin, as far as may be judged, was, according to his lights, a true romantic, an idealist—call it what you will. A rich man, he had practically never worked, saying that he did not fit into any official framework. Almost all his early youth had been spent in travelling. He knew Rome down to the last picture, the most obscure side-street; he had travelled on foot through Switzerland, had lived and studied in Paris and London. And that was all! In every other respect his life had been utterly monotonous and colourless. It seemed to have passed entirely in efforts towards acquiring culture, in discussions about art, science, politics, followed by good dinners, in spending the summer months on his estate or in some other favoured rural spot. There was something rational and tranquil even in the way he managed his estate. His closest friends knew nothing about his heart except that after falling in love with a girl whose parents had not allowed her to marry him, he had entered into intimate relations with a clever and charming married woman who was now dead, and that these experiences had apparently passed very lightly over Belavin himself. There seemed to have been not a single day in his life when he had been sad and not, indeed, any reason why he

should be, whereas my hero, despite his deeply-ingrained practical ambitions, had been seen to be in a truly romantic state for the last three years. What is the meaning of this? Is it that there is usually a streak of callousness in all romantics, or that, with their heightened demands and strict ideals, they are really less prone to enthusiasm, and therefore, as it were, live less intensely, and do not make so many mistakes?

Our young friends made certain preparations in anticipation of Belavin's visit. The floor was waxed in the tiny drawing-room and study. A newly-purchased lamp was lit. They decided that Nastenka was to pour out tea and hand round certain delicacies which were to accompany it. In a word, one of those little evening tea-parties, in which Petersburg official society abounds, was planned.

"No dressing-up, now!" Kalinovich told Nastenka. "Nothing grand, just be nice and neat!"

He wanted to show her off to Belavin.

"Very well, my dear," she replied, divining his meaning.

At about nine a ring at the bell was heard. Belavin had come. Kalinovich introduced him to Nastenka as if she were the lady of the house. She betrayed slight confusion.

"I have heard a great deal about you," said the visitor, in easy but courteous tones, pressing her small hand.

"Ah, so he's been talking about me, has he?" said Nastenka, glancing at Kalinovich.

"Yes, indeed," replied Belavin impressively, sitting down and leaning on the handle of his expensive stick.

"But tell me," he continued, addressing Nastenka as if she were an old friend, "this is probably your first visit to Petersburg? What sort of impression has it made

on you? I am always interested to hear what effect it has on new-comers."

"I have scarcely seen Petersburg as yet, and can only say that I have been most impressed by the architecture, or rather the sculpture, for in other parts of Russia, though for all I know there may be some, too, one hardly ever comes across it. But here you feel that this art is a living thing, it forces itself on your attention. Those horses on the bridge, the sphinxes, the statues on the houses. . . ."

Thus Nastenka attempted by hints and allusions to express her thoughts, obviously anxious to say something very clever.

"Why, I think that's true," Belavin replied. "Looking back on my own impressions I see that it is. For though we occupy not merely so many acres, but quite a good bit of this planet, we have to go to Petersburg to get the faintest conception of architecture—it's incredible! The country is really extraordinarily poor in the fine arts—much too poor."

"We keep meaning to go to the theatre, and we simply can't manage it—so annoying!" continued Nastenka.

"Oh, you must go to the theatre!" exclaimed Belavin. "But not to the Alexandrinka, for goodness' sake, or you'll spoil your first impressions! Go to the Italian opera. That and the Hermitage, I assure you, are the only two places in Petersburg where one can spend one's time to any aesthetic advantage."

"Oh yes, the Hermitage too!" interposed Nastenka.

"Definitely. And this is my advice: don't begin with the Spanish school, or after seeing Murillo you will be spoilt for all the rest. You won't want to see anything else, for the Raphaels are very weak. And the German school is bad and poorly represented. In the French school Poussin is the only thing you will care about, but Murillo—what passion in the colour, the poses . . . oh, God! And

all so reserved, combined with such infinite artistic taste—inimitable! Yes, Murillo and the wealth of the Flemish school are marvellous!”

“Oh, how glad I am!” cried Nastenka, agitated by the very thought of seeing all this. “I’m afraid,” she continued, “I haven’t got a musical soul, and I have no ear. But the theatre.... Of course I’ve never seen anything even passable in my life, but I have a feeling I could become very fond of it. You don’t know how cross I am with Yakov Vasilich—the day before yesterday, fancy, a man called Ivolgin came to see him, a young man who adores the theatre and is determined to go on the stage. And for that very reason Yakov Vasilich doesn’t want to know him! I call it both silly and old-fashioned.”

Nastenka uttered these last words with extraordinary animation. Belavin looked at her with ever-increasing attention and interest.

“So it is,” he assented.

Kalinovich smiled.

“It was that very student who listened to our conversation in the theatre,” he told Belavin.

Belavin nodded.

“His father is a very rich man.” continued Kalinovich, “and he sent him to the university, where, however, he does nothing at all. At first he was entranced by Karatigin and now he is studying Shakespeare (by himself), out of sheer stupidity. He came to see me once when I was ill, and began ranting and raving.”

“All right, you were ill then. But now? You admit yourself that, after all, his aspirations do him credit, so why should you despise him?” urged Nastenka.

“Especially when you think of the youth of Petersburg,” put in Belavin, “who are all so conventional and correct and callous, without the slightest aspirations of any sort that might lift them ever so little out of the rut.”

“Yes,” agreed Nastenka. “But you will agree that if

people treat him like that and crush all his aspirations, he will begin to lose faith in himself, grow cool, and at last quite sober down. Knowing nothing about him, I received him, but Yakov Vasilich wouldn't have him. . . . The poor boy begged to be allowed to come, he says it's most important for him. What a pity! Perhaps he really has talent."

"Talent!" echoed Kalinovich, now thoroughly irritated. "For heavens' sake! There's nothing I dislike so much as this sugary benevolence, this tendency to pet everybody—after all, it's nothing but moral laxity!"

"It's not laxity a bit, it's a perfectly deliberate attitude!" retorted Nastenka. "And he knows it very well," she continued, addressing Belavin and pointing at Kalinovich. "He knows how intolerant my views on God's world used to be, but when the time came for me to suffer myself, when I fell so low in public opinion that anyone seemed to think they could cast a stone at me with impunity, and yet none, even of those I had perhaps offended, ever made me feel this by so much as a look. Then I realized that there is a divine spark, a spark of love in each individual, and I ceased to dislike and despise humanity."

"A moral change for the better," remarked Belavin.

"Are you sure it's for the better?" broke in Kalinovich. "You are the most arrant foe of evil yourself. But according to what you now say, a certain official gentleman of our acquaintance should be praised and patted on the shoulder!"

"Evil must be chastised, but good must be loved," replied Belavin calmly.

"And you will only truly detest the evil in man when you are capable of loving the divine spark in him, the most infinitesimal drop of good in him," declared Nastenka, as if inspired, and she actually banged on the table.

"Bravo!" cried Belavin, clapping his hands. "As far

as I can make out, a drop is not enough for Yakov Vasilich. He requires that there should be tangible worth, that everything should have, as it were, its uniform, its rank. Then perhaps he will believe."

"That's just it!" cried Nastenka. "And he's always been like that. Good form blinds him to outrages which ought to have shocked him from the very first. For instance, your relations with the Count, if you remember," she reminded Kalinovich who, seeing that he was getting the worst of the argument, began to get really angry.

"Wait a bit! I'll obtain for you the privilege of enjoying this divine spark in a minute. I'll send for this gentleman. Just wait—he shall recite to you till you cry for mercy!"

He said this in a voice that was half-facetious, half-irritated, and began writing a note immediately.

"Why send for him, if you only mean to laugh at him afterwards?" remarked Nastenka.

Belavin nodded his head in approval.

"I shan't laugh," replied Kalinovich. "I'll just see what you benevolent ones will do—for you will have to find a way of enjoying a tiny grain of good in a heap of rubbish. You have invented the theory yourselves, but you will never be able to put it into practice."

And he dispatched the note.

The student did not keep them waiting long. They had hardly finished their tea when he appeared, looking radiant.

"I'm so much obliged to you," he said to Kalinovich. The latter introduced him to Belavin.

"Mr. Belavin!" he said, with a half-chuckle.

The student's cup of bliss was full.

"How glad I am to have the honour," he stuttered out, seating himself beside his new acquaintance. "Perhaps Yakov Vasilich has told you..."

Belavin replied with a courteous smile.

"How are you getting on with *Hamlet*?" asked Kalinovich.

"I've given up *Hamlet*, Yakov Vasilich," replied the student naively. "As you so justly remarked, the role is very difficult and subtle in detail. And now—think how agreeable for me your invitation was, for I was simply longing to consult you, if you will allow it. An amateur performance is being got up in the house of one of my friends. And I suggested—not the whole of it, of course, but just a few scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, and I'm determined to have it produced."

"And you will play Romeo yourself of course?" suggested Kalinovich.

"Yes, but I don't know how I shall do it. Naturally, I rely on myself most of all, for after all I've worked a lot, but the chief difficulty is that none of the girls in the company wants to be Juliet."

"Why not?" asked Nastenka.

The student shrugged his shoulders.

"They say the part is difficult, that Juliet is in love with Romeo, and that it's improper to express such feeling on the stage," he replied.

Nastenka smiled.

"It's just the same here as in the provinces," she told Belavin. "They wished to perform *Wit Works Woe* in a house I know, and not a single one of the ladies would agree to play the part of Sofya, because she had certain relations with Molchalin."

"The common lot of all amateur performances," put in Belavin.

"Recite something to us," Kalinovich asked him, with the obvious aim of making fun of him.

"If you will allow me. I even brought the book with me," he replied guilelessly. "But it's hard to do it alone. I scarcely know how to. Allow me to beg you to read the part of Juliet," he said to Nastenka. "*Soyez si bonne!*"

"I've never done anything of the sort, and shall probably read it very badly," she replied, stealing a glance at Kalinovich.

"But you will read it, won't you?" exclaimed the student.

"Of course she will! After all, who should read Juliet's part, if not you?" said Kalinovich.

Nastenka shook her head at him reproachfully, but so that no one noticed.

"Very well," she said, and wishing to gloss over Kalinovich's sarcastic tone, she took the book and, after glancing through all the speeches in the scene, began to read aloud in real earnest. The student was in ecstasies.

"Splendid!" he cried, and recited his own part with enthusiasm.

Kalinovich cast mocking glances at Nastenka and Belavin, but they did not respond, and Nastenka, starting on the next monologue, gradually warmed to it and quite threw herself into the part. Accustomed to read aloud from her childhood, she did it almost irreproachably.

"Why, you read marvellously! You have a real gift for the stage," said Belavin at last. Throughout the reading it would have been impossible to fathom his thoughts from the expression on his face.

"I'm so glad!" said Nastenka. "What if I were to go on the stage?" she added, addressing Kalinovich.

"By all means," was his reply.

As for the student he was almost in a frenzy.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" he exclaimed, turning to Belavin to find out his opinion. "And what about me? What did you think of me?"

"Not bad! But you should listen more closely to the poetry. You must get below the surface, and in general be a little more subtle and not quite so crude in your acting," replied Belavin.

"Yes, yes, that's just what I want to attain," agreed

the student. "But you were marvellous!" he said to Nastenka. "Of course, I hardly dare, but it would be a good deed--supposing we ventured to ask you to take Juliet's part! The theatre is in the house of my very good friend--Madame Volmar. I'll go and see her tomorrow and tell her. She'll be delighted!"

"Thank you, but I have never acted," objected Nastenka half-heartedly.

"*De grace, soyez si bonne!* Be so kind! I am ready to go down on my knees to you!" implored the student.

"No, no, she's not going to act," said Kalinovich, and to put an end to the discussion he turned to Belavin and started talking about something quite different.

But the student did not give up hope. He went on begging Nastenka behind the backs of the others. Hardly listening to him, she began turning the pages of *Romeo and Juliet*, which she had never read before, and became gradually absorbed in it.

"Good heavens, how beautiful it is!" she said.

The student looked at her, entranced. Belavin too allowed his pensive blue eyes to rest on her every now and then.

Towards midnight the visitors rose to take their leave.

"Well, old boy, you have found a treasure!" said Belavin to Kalinovich under his breath in the hall.

Kalinovich smiled complacently, but returned to Nastenka, deep in thought.

"What a fine person Belavin seems to be!" she said.

"Yes," replied Kalinovich mechanically.

His thoughts were far away at the moment.

IX

The scene described in the preceding chapter was re-enacted pretty frequently and the mutual understanding between Nastenka and Belavin became every day more

marked. As for Kalinovich, he withdrew from them ever deeper into his own shell. His was not a nature to content itself with domesticity and simple friendship. The humble comforts with which he was surrounded began to seem to him ridiculous to the point of loathing. He tore himself away in a kind of rage from the shop windows, which mocked at him with innumerable elegant articles, each of which seemed to be a *sine qua non* for every decent person. When he passed huge mansions, he looked through the plate-glass windows and saw the brilliantly illuminated second storey, flowers, hanging lamps, chandeliers, vast gilt-framed pictures, he would halt involuntarily, thinking to himself with rankling envy: "How fine it is in there, and to think of the fortunate blockheads who live there!" The carriages, the three-thousand-ruble fur coats—in fact, the whole of official, uniformed Petersburg—produced a similar impression on him. He could not repress profound inward tremors when there emerged from some state building a gentleman still fairly young, the breast of his court uniform adorned with crosses and stars. But ambitious and delectable as these dreams were, they had to give place to a question of greater urgency: the money brought by Nastenka would of course be run through in less than a year, and then what would become of them? Kalinovich had nothing coming in and no expectations. He was beginning to loathe himself, to call himself a sponge: he, a man active by nature, capable of working, was unable to earn a crust of bread and was living on the dwindling resources of an impecunious mistress! This was really too much! In desperation he decided, conquering his pride, to send his novel to Zikov, begging him to publish it and if possible get him something to do on the magazine. Kalinovich could not bear to take his manuscript to Zikov personally, and perhaps be forced to hear bitter home truths from the lips of his

friend. By way of excuse he explained that he had been ill for three weeks and even now did not go out.

In reply he received a letter fastened with a black seal. The address was written in a woman's hand and all smudged with tears. It was Zikov's wife who answered him: "The friend to whom you write is no longer a denizen of this world. He died a fortnight ago, hoping to the last to see you once more. I do not know what to do about your request. Shall I send your manuscript to Pavel Nikolaich who, since my husband's death, apparently intends to treat me abominably?" Kalinovich was unable to go on reading. This was the final blow fate had planned to deal him. He knew that Zikov, though the latter had wounded his pride, had been the only man in Petersburg who took the slightest personal interest in his welfare and that he would have used his influence in literary circles, if literature had become his young friend's last resource. But now there was nobody left, nothing. . . .

All you young people and people not so young seeking in Petersburg a post, an occupation, your daily bread, can understand the position of my hero, for it may be that you know by experience what it means in such a case to lose your last support, while haunted by one galling thought—that here, in this very Petersburg, there are hundreds of activities, thousands of well-paid posts, with their accompaniment of fabulous apartments, the favour of superiors capable of doing anything whatever for you, and yet you alone are given nothing, admitted nowhere. Kalinovich rushed out of the house to conceal his despair from Nastenka. The strangest ideas flitted through his mind: now he thought how nice it would be to pick up a hundred-thousand-ruble note from the gutter, now he wondered if there was any possibility of selling his soul to the devil, or failing this, of going in for highway robbery, and returning with his plunder to live in society.

Suddenly a voice behind him called out: "Yakov Vasil-

ich!" He trembled all over. It was the voice of Count Ivan, and a minute later Kalinovich came face to face with him, as he leapt out of a smart phaeton on to the pavement.

"Well, how are you and what have you been doing with yourself? I have a thousand questions and reproaches for you. Fancy—not a line!" said the Count, pressing both Kalinovich's hands in his own, in his old way.

"I'm all right. I live in Petersburg," said Kalinovich.

"Yes, but what are you doing, tell me that, are you in a government office, do you go in for literature?"

"I don't work in an office, but I write a little."

"Ah, but how are things with you in a general way?" asked the Count. "All right? Not bad?"

"Neither bad nor good," replied Kalinovich.

"Neither bad nor good?" echoed the Count. "But you've joined our ranks now—you're a married man."

Kalinovich flushed.

"No, I'm not married," he said.

"What? Are you serious?" asked the Count, glancing into his face. "How is it that such obstinate rumours have been spread among us? Is Mademoiselle Godneva in Petersburg?"

"Yes, she is."

"And you're really not married?"

"No," said Kalinovich again.

"Hal" said the Count. "I'm so glad to have met you!" And taking Kalinovich by the arm he went on a little with him. "Just look how Petersburg improves all the time! In another five years you won't know the town when you come to it. Look at that building going up—won't it be handsome?" the Count ran on, obviously thinking of something.

"Are you here alone, Your Excellency, or with your family?" asked Kalinovich, feeling a sudden desire to see the young Countess.

"I am alone. Mademoiselle Paulina is here. Her mother is dead. She thinks of settling down here for good and I came to keep her company," replied the Count absently, and stopped as if struck by an idea. "Are you free today?" he said abruptly, turning to Kalinovich. "Wouldn't you like to dine with me, we could go and call on Mademoiselle Paulina afterwards. She lives outside town, just beyond Peterhof—the most delightful spot in the world!"

Kalinovich made no reply.

"Do!" urged the Count.

My hero never dined away from home and knew very well that Nastenka would wait all day for him, and would be alarmed. And yet, scarcely knowing why, he agreed.

"Very good," said the Count, and shouting to his coachman, he made Kalinovich get into the carriage with him.

The pair of grey trotters bore them swiftly over the road. Once more Kalinovich felt the agreeable swaying movement of a good carriage and his heart again throbbed to vain pride—here he was bobbing up and down on well-sprung cushions and looking down at the dense crowd of pedestrians.

"To Morskaya Street," cried the Count and they drew up in front of Dusseau's restaurant.

The moment they entered they were greeted by a frock-coated waiter, in white waistcoat and tie, a napkin on his arm.

"Good day, Mikhailo," the Count said to him kindly.

The waiter showed his teeth in a grin of respectful pleasure.

"Have you been in our city a long time, Your Excellency?" he asked.

"Oh no, only lately arrived," answered the Count. "They're all Tatars here, you know," he said to Kalinovich, leading the way to a room at the other end of the

restaurant. "And what's more, they're the most honest folk you ever met."

Mikhailo followed them.

"Well, now, what have you got for us to eat?" asked the Count, seating himself on the sofa with careless ease. "None of your *table d'hôte* dinners, you know!" he added.

"Yes, Your Excellency," said the waiter.

"To begin with, do us cutlets *au naturel*, if the veal is good, of course, and for God's sake, don't let them use butter! And then—you have pullets, of course?"

"First-class ones, Your Excellency! Paid a ruble fifty, silver, for them."

"Very well, then. And none of your *purée* soups, you do them very badly. We'll have *crème à la tortue*, and mind it's good—*comprenez-vous?*"

"*Oui, je comprends*," replied the Tatar, grinning.

"Oh yes, and what have you got in the fish line?"

"Trout, Your Excellency!"

"Good! And let's have some champagne. Tell them to chill it, of course, and we'll have a bottle of Rhine wine too. But perhaps you prefer red wine at dinner?" said the Count, turning to Kalinovich.

"It's all the same to me," he replied.

"All the same, is it? It's a very good wine, by the way."

"The five-ruble or the eight-ruble?" asked the waiter.

"The eight-ruble, my good man, the eight-ruble!"

The waiter went away.

"Remarkably honest folk," said the Count again, looking after him.

Dinner was ready in half an hour.

"No—no flavour," said the Count, finishing his soup. "And the cutlets are no good at all, dear fellow," he added, addressing the waiter. "They're dry and they stink

of smoke. It's outrageous to impose on our digestions like that. Isn't it?" he said, addressing Kalinovich.

"It is," replied the latter, vexed with himself for having enjoyed everything, especially when he compared it with the muddy soup and dried-up beef their three-ruble-a-month cook fed them on. The same feelings came to him as he drank up a glass of mellow, fragrant Rhine wine, and he reminded himself not without bitterness that the doctor had ordered him to drink just such wine for his health, whereas he had to be content with Madeira at sixty kopeks a bottle.

"We'll have fruit instead of cake. That will be nice, I think," said the Count, and when the dinner came to an end he sipped maraschino from a liqueur glass, lit a cigar and flung himself on the sofa.

"Tell me something interesting—amusing," he said, as if in the mood for gossip.

"Nothing ever happens here. What about your part of the world?" responded Kalinovich.

"For goodness' sake! What can there be of interest in that hole?" exclaimed the Count. "True, lately I've been terribly busy in connection with the death of our esteemed old lady which, apart from the grief it caused us . . . in a word, I had to get her affairs straightened out. She left a vast fortune, much more than anyone had expected. Five hundred thousand rubles silver apart from property . . . immensel"

A tremor passed down Kalinovich's spine.

"The estate's pretty good, too, isn't it?" he asked, trying hard to appear a perfectly indifferent listener.

"The estate—I'll tell you! Not to speak of rents, there are five grain-mills, and if the minimum annual returns from each is reckoned at three thousand silver rubles, they alone yield fifteen thousand rubles silver a year. Then there's the Moscow estate . . . nobody thought anything of it formerly, and all of a sudden—rich people

always have luck, you know—the railway line runs across it. Someone or other had taken it into his head to lay out vegetable beds there, and now, what do you think—they pay ten thousand yearly for the land alone. Why, old boy, this alone would be a fortune for simple people—a plot where hunger or thirst will be unknown, a plot which will never need tending or insuring. Perpetual interest on perpetual capital. What could be better?”

Kalinovich listened to the Count as to the voice of the tempter. “And all that might have been mine!” The thought stirred the depths of his soul.

The bill came to thirty-two rubles. The Count handed over thirty-five, murmuring: “Keep the change!” and went out of the restaurant.

Kalinovich followed him.

“This man gives away three rubles for a tip as if it were a ten-kopek piece, and I worry at the thought of having to pay a ruble for a return-ticket on the steamer, and would have no objection to his paying it for me. Oh, poverty! What base and loathsome thoughts you instil in our hearts!” thought my hero, and in order to prevent his wish being fulfilled, hastened to be first at the booking-office in order to take his own ticket.

The steamer sped rapidly out to sea and the passengers gaily crowded the deck, Kalinovich the only thoughtful one among them. The Count led the conversation imperceptibly back to its former subject:

“Shipping is a fine investment,” he said. “It pays from fifteen to eighteen per cent. How nice it would be if we could put my cousin’s money into the company!”

“And can’t you?” asked Kalinovich.

“No,” replied the Count in tones of vexation. “It lies in the bank in the most idiotic manner—just in the very place where, whatever anyone says, it is both foolish and immoral for it to be, in an enterprising age like ours. But what’s to be done? Woman-like she is in ecstasy over

this farm she has bought, with its fishing and grass and cows. And yet it's a mere plaything, a drop in the ocean, considering her capital, which ought to be set free, since, with just a little ingenuity and proper administration, it would bring in a steady hundred thousand a year—why, you could buy up a German duchy for that! Just think!"

"And all that might have been mine!" this thought haunted Kalinovich relentlessly.

In the meantime the steamer was approaching the landing-place, where a cutter lay in wait to take them ashore. Everything conspired to charm Kalinovich. The evening was clear, still, and warm. The sun, already low over the rippling expanse of the sea, was like a ball of fire, gilding the horizon and sparkling on the tips of the wavelets. The oars of twelve boatmen in red shirts stitched with gold braid moved up and down like the wings of a bird. On the bank, almost buried in verdure, were country-houses in every known style of architecture. From some of these came the sounds of piano playing, and exquisite heads appeared amidst the verdure above the graceful folds of white dresses. At last the cutter stopped in front of a house, from the tiny landing-place of which marble steps descended to the water.

"*Allons!*" cried the Count, jumping out and leading Kalinovich up a broad path through a garden which displayed from their very first step the decorative traditions of Petersburg suburban residences: at the end of this path could be discerned one of those charming houses of Gothic architecture which may still be seen in small German towns. The further they went the more there was to see—on the other side of a tiny stream spanned by a toy-like wooden bridge, stood a gay Chinese pagoda; then came a kind of grotto; and still further off there stretched a dark tunnel formed of the branches of acacia, at the mouth of which was a cupid

on a pedestal, his forefinger raised in warning, as if to say: "Approach at your peril, mortal!" But it would be hard to do justice in mere words to the cleared space in front of the house itself. Tapering plants in enormous tubs extended their leafy boughs towards the house; rose-bushes, each of the flowers on them the size of a fist, blossomed in the middle bed, surrounded, wreath-like, by dahlias in all the colours of the rainbow. The balcony was thickly festooned with climbing ivy. They found their hostess in the first drawing-room, comfortably ensconced on a small sofa, at a miniature work-table adorned with gilt arabesque. Since she was still in half-mourning, Paulina wore white, and, with her hair done up according to the fashion of the moment, she struck Kalinovich as having become younger and prettier. Opposite her sat a grave old gentleman, sporting a couple of stars.

"I bet you a thousand rubles you won't guess whom I have brought you!" cried the Count, going into the room.

"Oh, Monsieur Kalinovich! Good gracious! Where did you spring from?" exclaimed Paulina, holding out her hand cordially.

"Monsieur Kalinovich," she said, introducing him to the old gentleman and then she uttered a name which Kalinovich recognized as belonging to one of those imposing families the very mention of which strikes awe into the heart of an ordinary mortal. Bowing to the old gentleman with a mixture of fear and respect, Kalinovich seated himself with the utmost circumspection.

"I had the honour to call on you today, Your Excellency, but was not admitted," said the Count, a note of respect audible in the tones of his voice too.

"Yes, I left early today," drawled the old gentleman, as if stating some great truth.

"And how is the Baroness?" asked the Count, turning to Paulina.

"Oh, the Baroness—you have no idea how angry she made me today!" replied Paulina. "Fancy! I expected the Duke, here, to dinner, and she said she would come, too. The clock struck four, no Baroness, half-past four—still no sign of her! I was terribly hungry. At last the Duke came. Of course he got a scolding—didn't you, Duke?"

"Oh yes, a very severe one," smiled the old gentleman.

"And still no Baroness!" continued Paulina. "And fancy, a messenger comes from her long after five—she is unable to come because something in her tilbury is broken, and she has taken a vow never to go to the country unless she drives herself."

The Duke shook his head.

"She's simply sweet!" said Paulina, "I adore her! She's a darling, *n'est ce pas?*" she repeated, turning to the Duke.

"Yes, *c'est une femme de beaucoup d'esprit*. I've known her since she was a child, and even then you could see she was something out of the common. *Une femme de beaucoup d'esprit*," said the Duke.

"Isn't she?" assented Paulina eagerly. And then, turning to Kalinovich as if wishing to draw him out of his silence: "Well, and how are you? Tell me about yourself!"

"The rumours we heard about Monsieur Kalinovich are absolutely unfounded," interposed the Count.

"In-deed!" responded Paulina, in evident embarrassment.

"Absolutely unfounded," agreed Kalinovich, with a grimace of disdain.

"Fancy!" exclaimed Paulina and to change the subject she asked the old gentleman some trivial question.

"I think the Baroness has come," said the Count.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" exclaimed Paulina, and at that moment an exceedingly beautiful woman burst into the room. Kalinovich had never believed a woman could be so elegantly dressed as she was.

"*Bonjour, comte!*" she said to the Count. "Oh, heavens, whom do I see, Grandpapa?" she cried, turning to the old gentleman.

"Grandpapa again!" said the old gentleman, shrugging his shoulders.

"No, no, you're not Grandpapa! You're ever so young!" the Baroness replied playfully. "*Bonjour, chère Paulina!* Oh, how tired I am!" she added, sinking on to the sofa.

"Did you come in the tilbury?" Paulina inquired.

"Of course! And just think how annoying—I lost my bracelet, how, I don't know—and worst of all it was a present from my brother. That naughty Beauty of mine is so fiery! I had to keep her in check and the clasp may have come open accidentally. Such a nuisance!"

"And does the Baron allow you to drive?"

"Oh, I never ask in such cases. Let him grow!"

"I see he's given you up as hopeless," smiled the old gentleman.

"Of course!" she answered lightly. "Oh yes, *à propos* my bracelet, before I forget," she said to Paulina. "I was in town yesterday or the day before, and went to see Monsieur Lobri. He says he will sort out all your diamonds and reset them. Now mind you don't give them to anyone else. The man's a genius in his own line."

"But why all—that's too much!" objected Paulina.

"All, all, *chère amie*, every single one!" the Baroness urged. "You know how diamonds are worn now. *Rapetez-vous*," she said, turning to the old gentleman, "Madame Peinard at Vronsky's ball? She was covered with diamonds, but they were so charmingly distributed that there was nothing showy about it, and *l'ensemble* was exquisite."

"*Vous avez beaucoup de perles?*" the old gentleman asked Paulina.

"More than I know what to do with," she replied.

"Show them to us, *chère amie*, do!" pleaded the Baron.

ess. "I adore diamonds, I could play with them all day, like a naiad."

"Oh, really!" said Paulina, hesitatingly, but the Count said hastily: "I'll go and get them!"

"Ayez la complaisance," said the Baroness.

The Count went out of the room.

"Not bad, eh?" he said to Kalinovich on his way back, letting him feel the weight of the box from which Paulina, who unlocked it reluctantly, drew various objects with careful fingers.

"C'est magnifique! C'est magnifique!" exclaimed the old gentleman, examining a solitaire, some diamonds and a pearl necklace.

"But how absurd the settings are! Just look at that comb! Oh, how stupid our grandmothers must have been! Fancy wearing things like that!" exclaimed the Baroness, her eyes gleaming.

"My cousin and I dropped in to have them valued the other day," the Count told the old gentleman. "The stones alone, without the settings, are worth two hundred thousand."

"I do not doubt it," was the reply.

When they had finished looking at the jewels, all went into the dining-room for tea. The sight of the huge antique silver samovar on the round table brought the conversation round to the same subject again.

"I don't know what to do with the silver, either," said Paulina. "It's all so old-fashioned."

"As for the silver, *chère cousine*, I am in complete disagreement with you, say what you will! Those antique goblets and vases! The tracery, the exquisite forms! The bacchanalian and gladiator scenes carved on the sides of antique vessels . . . all this modern sculpture aren't worth a fig compared with the old handiwork. It would be a sin to alter such beauty!"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Paulina.

"How can you hesitate?" admonished the Count. "Especially since there will be a fire-place in your drawing-room, and these treasures would suit the mantel-piece to a marvel."

"That might be very nice," remarked the Baroness, "but mind you don't have too much, or it will look like a jeweller's shop."

"Oh, not too much, of course!" replied the Count. "Just a few of the best examples. Certainly not all of them! The late General," he continued, shielding his lips with his hand and speaking almost in Kalinovich's ear, "administered the confiscated estates after the Polish campaign, and it is not hard to guess at the resources on which he was able to draw."

The conversation proceeded in this spirit for some time, till the Count at last reminded Kalinovich that it was time to go, and they began taking their leave. Paulina showed them the courtesy of leaving her other visitors and seeing them through the garden.

"Don't forget me, Monsieur Kalinovich," she said. "Come for a whole day next time. We'll talk and read at our leisure. Haven't you written any more books? Bring something with you when you come."

Kalinovich bowed.

The same cutter took them back to the steamer. The sea was still more beautiful in the moonlight, but my hero had no eyes for nature just now.

"A fine fellow, that Duke," said the Count, "and extremely influential. He is very fond of the sprightly Baroness. All sorts of gossip is rife about them, of course, though it seems impossible that there could be anything serious on her side. She's too young, and too much the society lady for that. However that may be, she has a strong influence on him, and the best way to get at him is through her. And she's not at all difficult

of approach—fond of gadding about and running into debt. If one touches on those chords with her, much may be achieved.”

Kalinovich, listening to these words, stared morosely at the dome of St. Isaac’s, gleaming in the distance. In the provinces he might have adhered to other principles and ideals, higher and more honourable. But in Petersburg it had become almost impossible to do so. The last gleam of the poetry that had, after all, expressed itself in his aspirations towards study, his dreams of literature, his liking for the good-natured Pyotr Mikhailich and, last but not least, his love for the sweet, spirited Nastenka, was finally extinguished by his new ambitions and desires. Ideals and principles were now things of the past, and he could see before him nothing but the stony, heartless city, in which the sole motto underlying daily life was: money is everything.

Kalinovich tugged angrily and roughly at the bell-pull beside the door of his home. Nastenka was still up, and opened the door herself.

“Oh, my dear! What happened? Where *have* you been? Goodness knows what I’ve been imagining!”

“What was there to imagine? I’ve been to Pavlovsk, to see some friends. I can’t stay at home all day,” replied Kalinovich.

“But without saying a word! I waited and waited, I haven’t even had dinner!” said Nastenka.

“That’s your business,” said Kalinovich and went to bed at once. But his sleep was troubled—he dreamed of a silver samovar, of the old Duke, of five windmills in a row.

X

The Count had taken a large room in the Hotel Demuth.

One morning, quite contrary to his usual custom, he sat clad in a silk dressing-gown making calculations at

his writing-table, before having completed his toilet. A gentleman stood warming himself at the fire in his overcoat—a red-haired individual, with a puffy bird-like countenance, and a clumsy air, a foreigner, that was obvious at first glance.

"Five eighths make forty—good!" said the Count, wrinkling up his handsome forehead.

The red-haired gentleman smiled complacently.

"It is good," he said.

"Good? I should say so! Forty per cent," the Count exclaimed. "Good!" After a moment's pause for reflection, he continued, as if talking to himself: "The only question now is to get capital, and as a matter of fact I know where to find it. But how is it to be done? It's in the family. They won't take interest, they'll say: 'You can have it as a loan.' And that 'as a loan' is just what I can't stand. I'm a businessman—I don't lend money without interest myself, and don't want others to lend to me without interest. The honour of a businessman, you understand."

"I understand," said his companion. "But what's to be done?"

"Of course it can't be helped. I shall have to make up my mind. But I'd like to manage it cleverly, you know, so as not to be too much obliged to anyone," said the Count, and again fell to thinking.

A servant entered.

"Kalinovich to see you, Your Excellency," he announced.

"Deuce take it!" exclaimed the Count irritably. "Who invited him? Ask him in," he added.

But when Kalinovich came in the Count received him with his usual courtesy.

"Good morning, Yakov Vasilich," he said. "*Prenez place*. But how thin you are! You look liverish."

"I've been ill ever since we met," replied Kalinovich, who certainly looked quite unlike his usual self, and in

whose eyes there was an expression of strange determination.

"Too bad!" said the Count, obviously absorbed in his own thoughts, and he turned back to his former companion.

"Suppose we begin preliminary operations after September!" he suggested.

"Too late. The machinery can be sent all the way by water, and it will freeze soon."

"Freeze. Yes, navigation will stop. It's devilish annoying!" cried the Count.

"What is worrying you, Your Excellency?" asked Kalinovich.

"I'm starting a sugar refinery. This is Mr. Pembroke, he's an Englishman. He is so good as to wish me to take part in his project, and if we are lucky enough to obtain privileges, we can count on a certain forty per cent interest."

With these words the Count looked out of the window.

"Only a trifle is lacking—money," he continued, smiling bitterly. "And yet there are any amount of people who have millions lying useless. Like the dog in the manger—can't use it themselves and won't let anyone else use it. You, as a practical man," he said to the Englishman, "know what money means in matters of trade. A nothing, a mere means, just scraps of paper, to be picked up anywhere at any time. The idea of an enterprise is what matters—but with us it's exactly the opposite. You can invent what you like, you can pull the stars down from the sky, but if you have no money of your own everything is useless."

"No credit," said Pembroke darkly.

"None at all. You can't even form a company—I don't mention the shares themselves. Here you are—practically feeding it to them, and they won't even listen. And it ends in your having to waste your time over trifles. Here have

I been dabbling in trade for the last thirty-five years, and what haven't I tried my hand at! I've gone in for everything except growing oranges on the stumps of aspen trees—and it's all been no good! You have to be thankful if you can make thirty thousand rubles or so a year."

Kalinovich scarcely listened to them. He was on pins and needles, and only waited for the Count to come to a pause to burst out:

"I have come to you on my own business, Your Excellency."

"What's the matter?" asked the Count.

"I can only tell you about it in private," replied Kalinovich.

"Ah!" said the Count, and biting his lip and narrowing his eyes he turned to the Englishman: "Then our business must stand over till Friday, Mr. Pembroke."

"Till Friday!" echoed the latter.

"Yes. I'll think over my side of it too."

"Well, good-bye!" said the Englishman, and left them.

"Good-bye, *mon ami*, good-bye," said the Count, seeing him to the door; when he came back he resumed his former seat.

"Clever chap!" he said. "Good heavens, what extraordinary people these English are! A simple engine-driver, and dead drunk every night into the bargain. And as sharp as a first-rate financier. But tell me, my dear Yakov Vasilich, exactly what this business of yours is."

"My business, Your Excellency—" began Kalinovich, forcing himself to smile. "You told me long ago that Petersburg was a good school for young people."

"It is—a very good school," confirmed the Count.

"Too good," continued Kalinovich. "I couldn't bring myself to tell you at our first meeting after so long a time—but my present circumstances are extremely unenviable."

"D'you mean your literary affairs are going badly?" asked the Count with a faint sneer.

Kalinovich gave a disdainful smile.

"Literature!" he repeated. "I cannot be content with mere aspirations. For me it means hard work, and only a good sum of money would repay me for the effort. But there's none of that, either."

"Money! A mere pittance, I presume. Go in for literature if you like for the sake of amusement, as people used to in my young days—to kill time. But to make a profession of it—why, it's scarcely decent!"

"What's to be done?" asked Kalinovich. "It's too late for me to become a scientist, and what is there to attract me in that, either? The highest peak to be attained is a professorship of some sort."

The Count smiled.

"In my opinion," he said, shrugging his shoulders, "a professor is no better than a school-teacher, with the difference that they go a little further in their speciality; and after all, what sort of people are those professors? They all come from seminaries, I believe. I don't suppose they would be admitted into decent people's houses. At any rate, neither in Petersburg nor in Moscow have I ever met one among our sort of people."

Kalinovich made no reply.

"And I couldn't get into the civil service either," he said, not raising his head. "I went to see that gentleman you gave me a letter to."

"Well, and what did he say?"

"He could do nothing for me. No vacancy."

"Too bad! He would have been nice to work under—a splendid chap!"

"He could do nothing for me," repeated Kalinovich, "and the worst of all is to be conscious of one's own powers, of certain abilities, to have this desire to work—and to do nothing. If I had the means, and if someone would

only open the way for me, I don't think I should be left behind in the race."

"Who can doubt that? There's absolutely no doubt of that," said the Count. "We shall have to think of something. You can't be left like that. I do wish I could do something for you."

Kalinovich was once more in the throes of embarrassment. His features contracted, giving him the look of suffering with which we are so familiar.

"There is nothing I regret so much, Your Excellency," he faltered, "as the mistake I made in not taking your kind hints regarding Mademoiselle Paulina."

The Count looked up with a flicker of astonishment in his eyes. Even he had not expected the conversation to take such a turn.

"H'm," he said, looking down again, as if in embarrassment. "It was a mistake on your part."

"Perhaps this mistake could be repaired now," continued Kalinovich, drumming on the table with his fingers to conceal the fact that they were trembling.

"H'm. Now!" repeated the Count, putting his hand to his forehead and closing his eyes. It was obvious that innumerable ideas were passing through his mind at that moment.

"All mistakes are hard to repair," he said. "Especially mistakes of that sort."

"With your aid, perhaps, it might be possible," said Kalinovich.

"Possible!" echoed the Count. "All is on the knees of the gods, but many opportunities have been let slip! A great many! So long as Paulina's mother was alive—and between you and me she was a tiresome stingy old thing—it was only natural that the girl should long to shake off her yoke and escape from the tedium of life in the provinces. But things are different now. Besides, then I knew

beyond doubt that she liked you. But how she feels now, God alone knows! Remember Pushkin's poem:

Who shall bid her remain in one celestial spot?

Who shall bid a heart (though no longer young), a virgin heart: 'Love only once, unchangingly'?

And then, Petersburg, you know! Good heavens, how soon it will sniff out where the treasure lies! Look how the generals and aides-de-camp are beginning to gather round!"

"I would never have ventured to touch upon this subject, Your Excellency, but whenever I go to see her, Mademoiselle Paulina is as gracious as she used to be.

"I'm glad you go to see her, and I did well to renew your acquaintance. But that's not the point, my dear fellow. If we are going to discuss this seriously, then we must be perfectly frank with one another, and I will begin by saying that both Paulina and I are well aware that you have a woman on your hands at the present moment. Now what about it? You will agree that. . . ."

Kalinovich frowned.

"If such an obstacle does exist, Your Excellency, I have obviously thought about it, and know how to remove it," he said, speaking rather low.

"There are all sorts of ways of removing obstacles, my dear Yakov Vasilich," retorted the Count. "As a man of the world, I know a man sometimes reasons thus: 'I am now making a marriage of convenience, but I shall go on loving another.' That's the way it is sometimes, isn't it?"

"Petersburg has not yet spoiled me quite as much as that, Your Excellency! Especially since, in my recent conversations with Paulina, I have already learned to know and appreciate her."

"She's a marvellous girl—there's no question of that. But bear in mind that, as a clever, proud and, perhaps,

even somewhat jealous woman, she would of course demand the complete rupture of any earlier ties. I consider it my duty to make this the first condition. Paulina's happiness is as much to me as that of my own daughter."

"I thoroughly understand that, Your Excellency," said Kalinovich.

"Good! Next, as regards myself," continued the Count, rising and shutting the door, "as regards my own participation," and he took his seat again, "I should like to ask you one thing: have you quite given up those undergraduate aspirations which are in reality mere delirium? This question is of the greatest importance to me."

Kalinovich looked away. He knew very well that his success in this case demanded the total renunciation of ideals which, despite himself, he could not help thinking of, even now.

"I am not what I was, Your Excellency," he began.

"That's what Platon Mikhailich says to Chatsky,"* laughed the Count. "I tell you frankly, I'm a bit afraid of getting too friendly with you, I am really, for fear of finding myself in a ticklish situation, such as you put me in that time at my home when, from the heights of your schoolboy morality, you saw fit to rebuke me. I should not like a repetition of this, believe me!"

"I am not what I was," said Kalinovich again.

The Count pondered for a short time.

"Good! Mind now! I trust you!" he began. "And my first word is this: I am a *practical* man, that is to say, one who has no intention of undertaking anything whatever without a clear prospect of advantage. Besides, to take up my time, to make use of me in any way, is equivalent to robbing me. . . . I have plenty of affairs of my own to see to, and whatever else I take up is bound to be at the expense of some of these, and to constitute a loss for me.

* *Chatsky*—the hero of Griboyedov's *Wit Works Woe*.—Tr.

That's one thing. Now for the second point: my influence on Mademoiselle Paulina may be a little stronger than you realize. This comes, of course, partly from our old acquaintance, our kinship, my participation in all their affairs, and, last but not least, from a friendship so close that nobody ever found favour in Paulina's eyes without my knowledge, and you may be sure that she will never engage herself without my approval. I will go even further: if her feelings with regard to any person were still in the balance, it would be in my power to pour oil on the flames. See? And now for the third point: whoever marries her will become the possessor of a yearly income of something like sixty thousand rubles, the equivalent to a princely portion, my dear fellow! And for such a man to let me have some fifty thousand rubles silver for my pains would not be too much, I think. Surely it would be foolish for me to proffer my services gratis! I have four children, and if I had not picked up a trifle here and a trifle there, I should have gone bankrupt long ago. All moral considerations must bow before such logic, and, think what you like of me—this affair cannot otherwise be brought off either for you or anyone else."

Having said all this the Count leaned back in his armchair, exhausted.

Little as Kalinovich had believed in the Count's honesty, such a proposal exceeded all his expectations. Moreover, he foresaw danger in another quarter.

"I don't possess so much money, Count," he faltered.

"Good heavens, I am not so mad as to count on your money, I know very well you have none!" exclaimed the Count. "The matter must be arranged quite differently. It's merely a question now of whether you agree to my conditions. If so, well and good! If not—equally well and good!"

"I agree," replied Kalinovich.

"It's a bargain then, though as a matter of fact I can

promise nothing as yet, and must first find out what Paulina's opinion is. If it is in your favour, I will then offer more detailed proposals for your consideration."

"And when may I know my fate, Your Excellency?" asked Kalinovich, rising and picking up his hat.

"Tomorrow. I shall be at Peterhof today, and tomorrow will have the honour to report to you, Monsieur the future possessor of property worth up to a million. . . . And what a blessing that is!" said the Count, pressing his hand and seeing him out.

The author foresees the thunder of accusations justly ready to break over the head of Kalinovich, and considers himself entitled, in justification of his hero, to relate only a few of the cases he has himself come across. You, for example, Madame Mayanova! Everyone knows that only words fraught with the loftiest magnanimity and honour ever escape your beautiful lips. And yet, in your distinguished drawing-room, to which my clumsy author's figure has occasional access, you once related, in my presence, with perfect approval, how your excellent *beau-frère* made an advantageous marriage, well knowing that the case was just like the one under consideration. And you, our friend, the modern Aristides, whose superb dinners we swallow with such gusto, while we all know that, with regard to a certain legacy, you employed for ten years (and that is rather more hardening than merely once acting against one's conscience), for ten years, I say, you employed tactics which enable us to count on your dinners for the rest of your life. You, oh, younger generation, not as yet fully initiated into the ways of life, but fully realizing the seductive charm of money, can you really bring yourselves to pronounce the word "guilty" over the head of my hero? As for you elders, who care only for virtuous heroes, I simply will not allow you on the jury. Out of the Court with you! Many worse things have stained the days of your life. All your aspirations have been

directed towards the acquisition of a well-ordered estate, town mansions, delightful summer residences. And all you now ask of God is that your children should follow your example. No! If anyone must be blamed, then let it be the age—it's a convenient generalization anyhow. Everything rotates around one axis. Behold—even in enlightened, humane Europe the knights have deteriorated into businessmen, the arenas have become stock exchanges!

As for my hero I can at least stipulate that he suffered sincerely and profoundly. He left the Count like a criminal and walked up Nevsky Prospekt, where he met any number of calm and cheerful gentlemen who certainly had infinitely worse sins on their souls than he. When he got home he found Belavin keeping Nastenka company. She was in tears, holding a letter in her hand. Taking not the slightest notice of this he pressed his friend's hand in silence and sat down.

"I've just had a letter," said Nastenka. "My father is dead."

Kalinovich glanced at her, and turned even paler than before. She handed him the letter. It was from Pelageya Evgrafovna, now left without a crust or a roof over her head, for the small estate had been put up to auction at the instance of the postmaster. She described in her atrocious scrawls how the old man had moaned in his last moments that his daughter and son-in-law had not come to him, and how this had hastened his death.

Kalinovich felt quite sick.

"It only wanted that!" he cried in accents of despair.

Nastenka gazed into his eyes, hoping for consolation. But he said not another word. Belavin merely looked at him, and turning to Nastenka, said:

"Who knows which is in more need of pity—he who has died, or he who still lives."

"It is not that which grieves me so, Mikhailo Sergeich," she said. "My father had his day, I shall always pray for

him, always remember him. But if only I could have seen him once more before he died! I longed to go to him of late—just as if I had a presentiment. But Yakov Vasilich couldn't, and nothing has turned out as I thought and hoped it would."

The last words seemed to scorch Kalinovich's heart. As usual his intolerable suffering expressed itself in irritation.

"How can you say you wanted to go to him, when you intended to go on the stage all this time?" he said.

"And you are not ashamed to say that? Oh, Jacques, Jacques!" cried Nastenka and turned to Belavin, with a mournful smile. "You know why he's so angry now? That student kept coming and begging me to act. And I actually did take part in the theatricals. I simply loved it. And I really do want to act—well, is there anything silly or absurd in that? I'm sure he wouldn't have said a word if I had wanted to learn to play the piano, because everybody does that, and because titled young ladies play. But he has been going on at me for a fortnight simply because I ventured to express a desire to act, and even in this sad moment he cannot forbear reproaching me."

"I'm not reproaching, I'm simply stating a fact," interrupted Kalinovich. "You could have foreseen this death and since you take it so hard you shouldn't have come here," he muttered through his teeth.

"And you can blame me for that, too! You wrote to me yourself!"

"I didn't write anything to you," interrupted Kalinovich in hollow tones.

This was too much for Nastenka.

"Just listen to him!" she cried, flinging out her arms. "Oh, Jacques, God will avenge me, he will! Mikhailo Sergeich, you are his friend. Speak to him! I tell you plainly I don't know what's come over him of late. He's torturing me. Those taunts ... the contempt, the disrespect for me!

Anyone would think all he wanted was for me to die! Oh, I will pray to God: Lord, teach me how to behave! You heard him just now—at such a moment when I have lost my father, to speak to me like this!”

Nastenka could say no more, and went sobbing out of the room.

“That’s right, complain!” Kalinovich called after her.

“Look here, Yakov Vasilich, this is really too bad!” exclaimed Belavin, who had kept silent up till now. “Why torture the woman? What has she done to deserve such treatment?”

“Excuse me, Mikhailo Sergeich, you are the last person to judge of this. You have never had to earn a crust of bread with your own hands, and at the same time have a capricious woman on your hands.”

“What do you find capricious in her behaviour?” asked Belavin.

“That’s my business. And if I am upset and angry, I have a right to be. And she has none!” exclaimed Kalinovich, flushing. And he went into his study.

Meanwhile Nastenka’s sobbing resounded louder and louder through the rooms. Belavin, indignant, disgusted to the depths of his soul by the scene, sat thinking for some minutes.

Then he rose and followed Kalinovich into the study.

“Look here!” he said. “Nastasia Petrovna is ill. You might at least send for a doctor.”

“There are servants in the house. Let them go!” said Kalinovich.

“A doctor might not come for a servant, and anyhow, we don’t know where to send? I’d better go myself.”

“By all means, since you have so much time to spare,” said Kalinovich.

Belavin shrugged his shoulders and went out. Half an hour later he returned with a doctor.

Kalinovich did not even come out of his room to see him. He was exerting all his energies to maintain his diabolic indifference, knowing that this was only the beginning of Nastenka's ordeal, and that much worse was in store for her.

XI

A little before seven in the evening Paulina was sitting on her granite landing-stage, scanning the bluish expanse of the sea through narrowed eyes. She had taken advantage of the freedom of country life to put on a loose muslin smock, which fell in billowy, careless folds on the rough, unhewn stone. An ermine mantilla thrown over her shoulders protected her from the perils of the sea air. Her feet were thrust into gold-embroidered slippers. Thus attired Paulina looked more like a matron, the mother of a family, than an unmarried girl. The cutter appeared in the distance.

"It must be he," thought Paulina, narrowing her eyes still more.

The cutter drew nearer, and in a few minutes the Count was at the landing-stage.

"*Bonjour!* Before you say anything else, tell me—have you any visitors?" he asked, jumping out of the cutter.

"Not a soul."

"That's good. You and I must have a very serious talk. Come!"

"Certainly. But how tired you are, my poor friend!"

"Terribly!" replied the Count. "I've been working like a horse all day." And going into the drawing-room, he sank into an arm-chair.

Paulina sat down next to him.

"What have you been doing?" she asked.

"Doing? I talked business first to one gentleman and then to another, and the last talk was all about you."

"What d'you mean?"

"I mean your heart and your hand are being requested."

Paulina blushed.

"What nonsense! Who is it?" she asked.

"An old suitor ... Kalinovich," replied the Count, not looking at her.

Paulina merely laughed.

"He's been beating about the bush for a long time," continued the Count imperturbably. "But today at last he came right out and asked me for your opinion."

Paulina sat in pensive silence, stroking her ermine.

"Not a very brilliant suitor for Petersburg," she said.

"Of course not. And yet..." Here the Count checked himself, and began again after a short pause: "As a matter of fact, it's not for me to say. You must obey the dictates of your heart."

Paulina smiled bitterly.

"What is there for my poor heart to say?" she asked, covering her eyes with her hand. "You know very well that I have loved only one man in the world—you. And whoever I should marry, it would be a mere travesty of marriage."

The Count again looked away.

"I know I was mad, but I was only a girl, then," continued Paulina. "And even now I'm not much better. I have always dreamed only of one thing—that you would be free one day."

"But that is impossible, Cousin. What's to be done?" exclaimed the Count.

Paulina sighed.

"I know it is," she said as sadly as before. "While my mother was still alive, and my life was so terrible, when I was bound hand and foot, I was of course ready to give myself to anyone whatever, but now ... I don't know. It seems terrible to put on new fetters—and what for?"

"The fetters exist even now," retorted the Count. "It would be misery for you to settle down in our rural obscurity again, to boredom and gossip. My business makes it impossible for me to be in Petersburg, so we can't live near one another anyhow."

Paulina pondered.

"And as to the match not being a brilliant one," he continued emphatically. "It seems to me that is the best feature of it, though of course in your present situation you could find a man with position and wealth. But, *chère cousine*, who knows how such a one might regard the past and seek to guide the future? It might turn out that you had put on fetters much worse than the old ones."

Paulina reddened and remained thoughtfully silent.

"This gentleman is quite another matter," continued the Count. "We take him half-naked, starving, a beggar by the roadside. He will be obliged to us for everything. Since he brings nothing himself he will feel bound to close his eyes to a great deal. And should he desire to interfere with your liberty in any way, it will be in your power to deprive him of everything."

Paulina continued to meditate.

"Why has he changed his mind? Have you forgotten your first conversation with him?" she said.

"Oh, rubbish! Calf love—nothing more!"

"But it is still going on. The lady is here."

"The lady," interrupted the Count scornfully, "has gone all lengths. He may be fourth or fifth on her list, but men don't think much of such feelings. Anyhow, I made it the first condition, so you see that's all nonsense. The great thing is that you should like him, for after all you will be his wife, and he will be your husband—it's a question of that now."

"I don't mind admitting that I like him better than

anyone else, although I can't help feeling that my heart underwent so much during my former sufferings that it has lost the power to feel anything. But of course," she added, thoughtfully, "he's clever—he could be made to enter the service."

"Of course he could," interposed the Count. "And then he's a man of letters, and though such gentlemen are nobodies while they are kept in the background, as soon as they are furnished with a fortune, why, good heavens, it is just as distinguished to be the wife of a writer as of some general or other."

"I know that," confirmed Paulina.

The Count saw very well that the matter was settled so far as the bride was concerned. But there was something more he wished to make certain of.

"I don't know what you think," he began, "but it seems to me that there is no reason for you, living as you are in Petersburg and belonging to a fairly good circle, to advertise his poverty. Why shouldn't he appear as a man of fortune? You could let it get about that he was an old love of yours whom your mother did not approve of. But such an obstacle could not be expected to exist in your heart. You marry him—excellent! You would have no trouble in doing this. Give him a small portion of your capital, and you'll make him such a fine bird that no one will be able to find a defect in him."

"That could be done, of course," replied Paulina.

"Could and should," put in the Count. "Especially since it would nip in the bud any questions and guesses as to why you should have made such a match. The answer would be very simple—the bridegroom is young, clever, well-educated, well-off, your equal in fact. And as for him, should he venture to put in any claims, you could simply say: 'You have had yours, my dear Sir, and so you can hold your tongue!'"

Paulina remained plunged in thought.

"Well?" asked the Count, holding out his hand to her. She gave him hers.

"What am I to tell the gentleman, then?" he asked, allowing a shade of tenderness to creep into his voice.

"Tell him," repeated Paulina, "tell him what you like—I don't care!"

"So, it's—yes, is it?"

"Let it be yes."

The Count rose immediately.

"*Adieu*," he said.

"Where are you going? Don't go!"

"I must, it's time. *Adieu*."

"*Adieu*," said she, but when the Count stooped over her hand to kiss it, unable to restrain herself any longer, she threw her arms round him and placed her head on his shoulder in floods of tears.

"I'm afraid, my dear, I'm afraid!" she said.

"Remember our bargain," said the Count, shaking his finger at her warningly and gently releasing himself. "If you mean to get married you mustn't cry."

With this and a gabbled "*Adieu*," he was gone.

Later Paulina was to ask herself again and again how she could have given in so thoughtlessly and so quickly. Like every girl she wanted, of course, to be married, and, equally of course, the affection for the Count to which she had referred had become so faint that, especially of late, when she remarked the utter selfishness of his views, she had actually begun to be afraid of him. And then she really did like Kalinovich for being so clever and even for being rather like herself in appearance, just as thin, pale and fair-haired. These were the only reasons, at first anyhow, which had caused her to take such an important step in life. "Destiny, nothing but destiny," she would tell herself every time. That same destiny in which man has always believed and against which he struggled in ancient times, making it the declared theme of his life's drama.

When he got back to Petersburg the Count's first step was to seek out his Englishman, whom he found drunk as usual, though in full possession of all his faculties.

"Well, Sir," said the Count, "things are developing. In a month's time you and I will have fifty thousand cash . . . see?"

"Yes, I see. That's good," said the Englishman.

"It's undoubtedly good," said the Count thoughtfully, but here he paused, smacking his lips. "It means tapping resources that might have lasted me for the rest of my life, and it seems a pity to risk them for a miserable fifty thousand. Well—can't be helped—it's my nature! Once I get an idea into my head there's no getting it out."

"If you were in London you'd have a lot of business. You have the brains for it."

"Perhaps I have. But you go and get a good sleep, old man! We shall have to begin seeing about privileges to-morrow."

"Yes, I'll have a long sleep," agreed Pembroke.

"Sleep, sleep!" repeated the Count.

Having thus disposed of the Englishman he went back to the hotel, where he was surprised to find Kalinovich, morose and pale.

"Well, Yakov Vasilich," said the Count as he entered the room. "Your affairs are going better than could possibly have been expected. Paulina has practically consented."

On hearing this Kalinovich turned paler than ever, so that the Count could not fail to observe it.

"But what's the matter with you? You look awful! Are you ill again?"

"It's not that," replied Kalinovich. "The woman we spoke about . . . I feel I cannot leave her," he half-sobbed, clutching at his temples and flinging himself down on the sofa.

This time it was the Count's turn to be pale.

"Come, come, old man!" he said. "What's all this? This won't do! Is it that you love her so? Is that it?"

"I don't know. I love her and hate her at the same time, and that's all I know," replied Kalinovich, as if bereft of his wits.

"Neither the one nor the other," retorted the Count.

"You have nothing to hate her for, but neither have you any reason for anxiety. In our times women don't die of love, thank God."

"They do!" exclaimed Kalinovich. "That's a thing you can't understand. Your fine ladies don't, but in the other classes, thank God, feelings still exist. She has already tried to kill herself once, just because I didn't write to her."

The Count listened to Kalinovich, his arms folded across his chest.

"Fancy that, now! That is certainly the height of sensibility," he remarked.

Kalinovich flew into a passion.

"I will thank you not to adopt that tone, Count," he said with asperity. "As it is, your cynicism is exceedingly *mauvais ton*, and in this case it is quite unsuitable. When you speak like that you do not realize how low you have fallen, how terribly low!"

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"Admitted," he said, "that I have fallen very low, according to your view of love. My years, by the way, give me a certain right to this. But I wish to speak to you in all simplicity now, as honest people speak to one another. What are you doing? Think it over seriously. Only today you come to me and say you are fond of a certain young lady, and would like me to make a proposal to her on your behalf. You receive what is practically consent, and to this you reply that you love another, that you cannot leave her. . . . Say what you will, but this is the act of a madman. Not only is it impossible to do business

with you, it is impossible to speak to you. It's outrageous."

With an air of dignity, the Count ceased speaking.

"Yes, I am almost mad," said Kalinovich. "But my God, my God! If she could only see my sufferings she would forgive me. Cannot you see what my soul is like? It's like hell, that's what it's like! Have pity on me!" he cried, beating his breast.

"I understand it all very well," said the Count, "and I assure you that nothing but that idiotic university education of yours is to blame, when you got your head crammed with all sorts of magnanimous, sentimental ideas which have absolutely no place in real life. The Germans at least have the sense to limit their ravings to their student years—after graduating they behave properly. But with us a man is spoiled for the rest of his life. No junior guardsman in your position would hesitate for a moment, for the whole thing is nonsense. And you, a clever, educated man, are unable to rise above yourself for a single moment, to look around you dispassionately. Why, it's sheer puerility! You are in relations with some girl who is in love with you. You love her, too, although I doubt this. But never mind! You have the chance of a brilliant match, which any of our officials would make. And this match, in addition to a fortune, would bestow on you a charming girl (your own words), who retains so much affection for you. lucky man, that as soon as you are her betrothed she means to give you a hundred thousand rubles, simply to prevent you feeling that slight awkwardness of being a poor man and wedding such wealth. Such delicacy ought in itself to raise this woman in your opinion to goodness knows what heights. A hundred thousand—ha!" continued the Count, warming up to his subject. "Why, for a sum like that it seems to me a man should be ready to give up any love whatever. If however your affection for this young woman

is really so very strong—the deuce take her!— give her fifteen thousand rubles or so, by which, of course, you will be doing much more for her future than by living with her and sharing nothing but appalling poverty with her. Love itself should impel you to act thus.”

“A *million* rubles would not compensate that woman for my loss,” said Kalinovich.

“At first, perhaps, she will weep, and probably scornfully cast aside the money you send her. But she will think better of it, and lock it up in her trinket box, and if she is such a clever young woman she will realize that you are making a far greater sacrifice for her than if you played the sentimental faithful lover before her all your life. Believe me, this is so. And a little later, after the first passion has subsided, what is to prevent her from quietly getting married to some senior clerk, and bearing him children? And when they take a cottage in Bezborodko or somewhere every summer for the health of these children, they will bless you sincerely as their true benefactor.”

“And what if she does not live to enjoy these blessings but dies prematurely?” objected Kalinovich.

“Dies prematurely,” mocked the Count. “I have read of such cases in novels, but I must admit I never came across one in real life. Come, old man! We shall soon be quoting such copy-book maxims that we shan’t know where to look for boredom and embarrassment. You lack character, dear Sir, you have no will-power, that’s the trouble!”

Kalinovich seemed to be thinking deeply.

“If I see her again, all will be over. I shall be unable to do anything . . . and then that Belavin,” he said.

The Count laughed, leaning back in his chair with a swaying movement.

“Lord God Almighty!” he exclaimed. “What incredible depths of puerility! Then don’t see her again! Why on

earth subject oneself to feminine moanings and bewailings? Stay here for the night and tomorrow send her a note: 'My dear friend, and so on and so on, I'm alive and well, but have to leave on urgent business which will enable me to make our fortune.' And when you are married you can send her money, and there's an end of the matter. What could be simpler? I must say, Yakov Vasilich, I thought better of your mind and character."

"Anyone who falls into your hands, Count, is bound to be broken," said Kalinovich.

"My hands do not break, they straighten," retorted the Count. "But in any case it is very foolish of me to talk so much, and this is my last word. You must do as you like," he concluded in tones of annoyance, and picking up some papers from the table, began busying himself over them.

About an hour passed in silence.

"Count! Save me from myself!" cried Kalinovich at last in a voice of entreaty. At that moment he presented a piteous spectacle.

"But, dear fellow, what am I to do with you?" asked the Count sympathetically.

"Whatever you like—I am yours," replied Kalinovich.

"'Thou art ours, thou art ours, swear by this sword!'—that comes from some melodrama or other, I forget its title," said the Count. "And since there are no swords nowadays, we had better swear on crested paper, and therefore I ask you: do you wish to hear what I have to say?"

"Do me the favour to speak," said Kalinovich.

"The favour, in the first place, consists in the following: since you, dear Sir, by your recent behaviour have (as it says in some other play, whose title I cannot now remember, either) branded yourself with the seal of distrust, and—who knows?—might one day suddenly take it into your head to return to your former idyllic love, be so kind as to give me your note of hand in advance for the fifty

thousand rubles agreed upon, as a basis for my further activities. There is no danger for you in this, for you haven't a penny to bless yourself with, and there would be neither advantage nor pleasure for me in flinging you into debtors' prison and paying for your keep. When you get the money which I shall have obtained for you, you will hand it over to me. Agreed?"

Throughout this monologue Kalinovich had been gazing fixedly at the Count.

"What appalling rogues you and I are, Count!" he said.

"We are rather," agreed the latter. "But what's to be done about it? Can't be helped!"

Kalinovich laughed scornfully.

"Well—since one has to deal with rogues one had better be a rogue oneself," he said, and he rallied all his presence of mind in an effort to appear calm during the night he spent in the Count's suite.

XII

The next day everything gradually settled itself. Kalinovich, like one who had no longer any will of his own, wrote under the Count's dictation a note to Nastenka, the contents of which, though ambiguous, were moderately consoling. A double suite was taken in the aristocratic Italyanskaya Street, one half for the Count, the other for the prospective bridegroom. At the same time the Count casually presented him with a small sum (about two thousand rubles), for which, as he said, more by way of a souvenir than anything else, of course, he took his promissory note for fifty-two thousand. Two days later Kalinovich went, accompanied by the Count, to see his affianced bride. The meeting was rather a strange one.

"How d'you do, Kalinovich," said Paulina, her voice filled with new significance, as she came to meet them.

Kalinovich scarcely replied to her greeting. The rest

of the morning was devoted to the inspection of the tiny country estate, in which the most important part was played by the farmyard with its three plump Cherkassy cows. There were also two grey stallions in the stables, the very ones which had drawn the carriage in which we met the Count in Nevsky Prospekt. Paulina had some bread brought to her and began boldly feeding the fierce animals from her hand. And there was also a poultry yard, for the young proprietress wished everything around her to be thoroughly rural.

Kalinovich was initiated into these affairs in the utmost detail, as if he were already part proprietor, and it was not until after dinner, when people are as a rule more inclined than usual for heart-to-heart talks, that the Count was able to bring up the main subject.

"Yakov Vasilich would probably be glad if you would confirm what I told him on your behalf, *cousine*," he said.

Paulina looked down in embarrassment.

"I am quite ready to do so," she said.

"High time, high time!" said the Count, moving toward the balcony, and finally disappearing.

Left to themselves the betrothed couple were silent for some time.

"Do you like me, Kalinovich? Tell me that. I know I am not young, not pretty . . ." began Paulina.

In an almost inaudible murmur Kalinovich asked her what other feeling could have made him act as he had.

"And did you love Godneva?" asked Paulina.

"Yes, I loved her," replied Kalinovich.

"Very much?"

"Very much."

"Is it true that you are leaving her?"

Kalinovich drew a deep breath.

"She deceived me," he said.

"No, really! *She* did? I would never have believed it! It can't be true!"

"She did," repeated Kalinovich, wincing.

"I see you can't bear to talk about it."

"It's not easy for me, certainly."

"Then we won't," said Paulina and became thoughtful.

"Now listen to me," she resumed. "I myself wish to be frank with you, and tell you that I too once loved, and dreamed of belonging to one person only. This may have been a fatal mistake on my part, though there is no longer anything to be afraid of. This man is dead—for me, at least. But I loved him greatly."

Kalinovich said nothing.

"You won't be angry with me for that, will you?" persisted Paulina.

"What right have I to be angry?" he brought out at last.

"The right of a husband," smiled Paulina.

"That's true," replied Kalinovich, also with a half-smile.

"Don't be angry. I think I shall love you very much," said Paulina and held out her hand to him, which he had never before touched ungloved. It was cold and clammy. His whole body was shaken by a nervous tremor, and as if to make matters worse Paulina bent towards him and he felt that her very breath was that of a sick woman. The arrival of the Baroness at last put an end to this torture. She fluttered in, accompanied by the Count, like a gorgeous butterfly in her light dress.

"*Bonjour!*" she cried.

"*Bonjour!*" replied Paulina, and immediately introduced Kalinovich to her as her fiancé.

"*Ah, je vous félicite,*" said the Baroness.

"*Et vous aussi, monsieur,*" she added, stretching out her hand across the table to Kalinovich who, while pressing it, thought to himself: "If this little hand were to come into my possession, perhaps I might even be able to forget Nastenka!"

The Baroness of course immediately brought the con-

versation round to the subject of the latest fashions and made the coming wedding a pretext for going into the minutest details. She laid down the law as to the trousseau and the dressmaker who was to make it, the persons to whom the upholstering and furnishing of the bedroom and other chambers were to be entrusted, displaying at the same time so much taste and practical knowledge that the Count could only express his astonishment, admiration and assent. Kalinovich tried to look as if all this interested him enormously, though in his heart were intolerable grief and oppression.

According to the established order of things the future bride and bridegroom now began to meet daily, and the consequences of these meetings were such as could almost have been foretold. Everyone knows the intensity with which girls who are neither young nor beautiful, especially the clever ones, cling to the object of their passion, the moment they have the slightest excuse to do so. The cause of this is very simple: unspoiled by masculine attention, their intelligence and intellectual development make them thirst for love. They feel the need for this sensation and when such a star rises on their horizon they clutch at their happiness as a beggar clutches at a farthing. Paulina was no exception to this rule, whatever she may once have felt for the Count. She seemed to be falling more and more in love with Kalinovich every hour. Though not a bit less stingy and calculating than her mother had been, she had presented her fiancé with a cheque for one thousand five hundred silver rubles, without waiting for the Count to remind her. Kalinovich had kissed her hand in gratitude and seemed to be a little more affectionate in his manner towards her. But the money seemed to have brought him neither happiness nor tranquillity, and, once more unable to endure the burden of duplicity, he woke up one fine rainy, windy Petersburg

morning as yellow as a guinea. He had fallen a victim to jaundice!

The alarmed Paulina moved to town immediately and insisted on looking after the patient herself, incessantly endeavouring to distract him by her caresses.

Kalinovich, whom his illness had made still more nervous and irritable, at last felt for his fiancée that terrible physical loathing not to be concealed by the most superhuman endeavours, and goodness knows how it all might have ended! Fortunately the doctor who was treating him, learning of the relations between the persons, and apparently realizing what his patient's illness was, declared that for the success of his treatment the lady must not worry the patient and must leave him in peace, to be as much alone as possible. He conveyed this to the Count, who, understanding the true state of things no less thoroughly, began to invent all sorts of tricks for keeping Paulina in her own house, and took her shopping, whenever possible, and when she insisted on being with Kalinovich, he never left them alone together for a moment, in order to prevent her from overwhelming him with the expression of her tenderness.

The wedding preparations were drawing to an end. One day, when Kalinovich, nothing but skin and bone, was sitting up in his bed, as usual, his servant announced the arrival of Madame Shevalova's cook, Grigory Vasilyev.

"Ask him in," said Kalinovich.

In came our friend the old chef, still balder than before, clad in an old-fashioned magenta frock-coat with a high collar, brilliantly polished boots, and wearing a silver signet ring on his right hand.

"What do you want?" asked Kalinovich.

"Inasmuch as I am my master's most faithful servant..." began Grigory Vasilyev, his head slightly to one side, his body taut and rigid.

Kalinovich looked hard at him.

"That is to say, the same as I was to the old General—may his soul rest in peace and all our prayers to that effect—isn't that so?"

Kalinovich saw that the old fellow was absolutely drunk and offered him a three-ruble piece to get rid of him, but Grigory Vasilyev retreated several steps.

"That's not what I came for, Yakov Vasilich," he said, chuckling. "The fact is, our mistress Paulina Alexandrovna kindly informed us, through the Count, on yesterday's date, that she intends to become your wife and give all manner of balls and banquets, and I being old and incapable, and not to be relied upon, should therefore pack up my belongings and take myself back to the country. What am I to make of this? How is it to be? What does it all mean?" concluded the old man, assuming a questioning pose.

Kalinovich answered him not a word.

"It is mere slander to say I am unfit for work," continued Grigory Vasilyev, "but if anyone says I might be a dangerous person—that's another thing," he concluded with a significant expression on his face.

"How could you be dangerous?" asked Kalinovich, beginning to be a little amused by his prattle.

"If ordered, I could deliver a bold report," replied the old man with a certain pride. "Grigory Vasilyev is not one who can be tempted or bribed, or who wags his tail just because he is patted on the head. He never was and never will be. Grigory Vasilyev," he continued in sentimental tones, pointing at the ceiling, "once had a master—the General. He is now in heaven and you, I take it, are his successor. That's the way I see it."

"Certainly," assented Kalinovich.

"And if," continued the old man with still greater animation, "you are the true successor to his rank, crosses and morals, you have only to say to me: 'Grigory, go, old boy, and get the oldest besom in your kitchen, and drive

that there Count out of my house!' I should be bound to obey, and that's all."

These last words obviously intrigued Kalinovich.

"What makes you dislike the Count so?" he asked.

"Count!" cried the old man, with tears in his eyes. "This is what I think of him: the rye is green, its stalks are tall, its ears are heavy, the cornflowers grow amongst it, the wind plays in it, wafting its perfume, the heart of the peasant rejoices. But the horse of the steppe comes scampering into its midst, trampling it and crushing it, till it's nothing but a heap of weeds, and that's what the Count was in our home. That's what I think of him!"

"Why—did he plunder them?" asked Kalinovich.

"We didn't mind about his plundering!" replied Grigory Vasilyev. "Thank God there was plenty left after the General died—enough to shod ten such beastly counts. We *did* wonder, of course, knowing how close-fisted our mistress always was, to see her so generous with the Count! When she lost her husband we thought she would either go out of her mind or die. But the yeast shows what the dough will be—we saw then that a woman is always a woman, however high her rank. When she came to the country, a widow, that man simply cringed before her. He had all the portraits of the General burned as firewood in the stove, so that the sight of them should not reproach her, and from that moment, like a serpent, coiled himself up in her heart to tempt her, and lived and commanded there to the end of her life. Why, if he so much as looked disagreeably at a servant, before you could look round, the widow had given him the sack. Everyone had to make up to him, to tremble and bow down before the Count!"

Kalinovich frowned.

"What d'you mean—did they have an affair?" he asked.

Grigory Vasilyev shrugged his shoulders.

"The chamber-maids used to chatter, but who knows

if they lied," he said, with a bitter laugh. "And we would have forgiven him all that, Sir, remembering the proverb: 'A widow is a helpless creature,' but, oh, Master, Yakov Vasilich—we did feel bad about our young lady!" he cried, pressing his hand to his heart. "If our old General could have known that he would not even spare his only daughter, would not shelter her youth and innocence! Master! The General will make him answer for it at the judgment day. But more I cannot say."

"Why not?" asked Kalinovich morosely, looking at him.

"How can I?" countered Grigory Vasilyev, smiling bitterly. "How can we speak when our hands are bound, our feet are fettered, our tongues cut out? But if you yourself, since you are now in the place of our old General, if you should say: 'Grishka, open your heart to me!' then Grishka would open his heart. 'Grishka, shield neither my wife nor my daughter,' then Grishka would not shield them. Only one word—that's all!"

"Speak, of course, since you have begun," said Kalinovich, still more gravely.

"Speak!" repeated Grigory Vasilyev with the same bitter smile, shaking his head. "We must speak under the fear of God, Yakov Vasilich. Master, our young lady, perhaps even more than her mother, was inclined to that Count! I'm a servant—no more. And all I can ask is—is that man a Tatar, or is he a Christian? I wonder she has any eyes left to see with—always looking out of the window for him if he so much as hinted he might come—good gracious, Sir, you're our new master! The way the Mistress and Miss used to fall out! The Mother of God alone saw it all, understood them and judged them! And we, who had been with the family all our lives, why, we didn't know who we were to serve! But I, old fool that I was, used to say to those villainous lackeys of the Count—that was when the old Mistress was still alive—I up and said to them: 'You villains, what have you done to us? You and

your master have come to us like a Tatar horde, and taken us prisoner, laid us bare, you hounds!"

Kalinovich listened in silence, bending his head still lower.

"Master, Yakov Vasilich!" exclaimed Grigory Vasilyev, again pressing his hand to his heart. "Perhaps I have done wrong. But before the image of the Kazan Mother of God we implore you in tears from our very heart: do not punish our mistress but take pity on her, master! It wasn't her fault. She was under the influence of a bad man, but now she loves you with all her heart. That's the way we see it."

Kalinovich said nothing.

"Of course we are only slaves," continued Grigory Vasilyev, "but we couldn't help feeling how her girlish days were spent. First nothing but lessons, and then such dullness! What pleasure could she have with her old mother, and she so stingy? The only joy she ever knew was the Count with his fine talk. And so she was wild for him if I may say so."

"Why is Paulina Alexandrovna marrying me if she is in love with the Count?" asked Kalinovich suddenly.

"She has cooled to him, Sir. She is much cooler to him than she was," replied Grigory Vasilyev consolingly. "We have seen that for the last four years. She keeps saying to her serving maids: 'Oh, my dears,' she says, 'how I wish I could yet married!' Our young lady, master, is very clever, wise in her ways, perhaps in the depth of her soul she feels that she has sinned against the Lord, our creator. How glad she is to have you, words cannot tell. She does nothing but ask: 'Have you seen my betrothed? Don't you think he's handsome?'"

At this Kalinovich sighed. He ordered the old man not to chatter about what he had told him, and forcing him to accept the three rubles, told him to go home. But Grigory Vasilyev did not budge.

"And about my unfitness, dear and new master," he said, adopting a mournful pose.

"You shall stay," Kalinovich assured him.

But Grigory Vasilyev turned away as if unconvinced and shuffled out of the room.

When he had gone the patient seized his head in his hands and fell back exhausted. "God! O God!" he cried, and suddenly felt so faint that the valet who looked after him sent for Paulina and the Count in a fright. They came rushing in. Kalinovich implored them to arrange the wedding for the following day. He seemed to distrust his own resolution. Paulina was delighted, and their wedding was solemnized in the small domestic chapel.

The bridegroom stood before the altar as thin as a lath. To the priest's question: "Art thou promised to another?" he made no reply.

The only persons present at the ceremony were the Count and the husband of the Baroness, in their capacity as witnesses. They entered their noble signatures in the marriage register. After the wedding, quite in the Petersburg tradition, only a few intimate friends were regaled with ices and fruit at the house of the newly-weds, a few toasts were drunk, and the company hastily dispersed.

The bridegroom, his face like a death mask, clad in a rich dressing-gown and slippers studded with gold, passed over the soft carpet to the bride's chamber—and then all was silence. Out of doors also, silence reigned till about three in the morning. But at dawn a fire broke out in Liteinaya Street. A house was enveloped in flames in the course of a few minutes. The fire brigade galloped up and a crowd gathered. A woman was heard shrieking for rescue on the third floor. A shudder passed over the crowd, but no one stirred. Suddenly, a gentleman, without a tie and with his coat unbuttoned, appeared. Exerting what were obviously unaccustomed efforts, he placed a huge ladder against the wall, and running up it like a squir-

rel, shattered a window-pane with a single blow, and, despite the smoke and flames which greeted him, plunged through the hole. The crowd was tense with expectation. A few minutes later the deliverer appeared with an unconscious woman in his arms. The crowd greeted him with loud hurrahs and bravos. But he disappeared again.

This was the newly-wedded Kalinovich.

What had brought him there? Just half an hour before he had rushed like a madman out of the house, roamed up and down the streets for some time, and, chancing to arrive at the place of the fire, had plunged into the flames, not so much, apparently, to rescue a human being as to seek there his own death. So great had been the ecstasy and enjoyment of his wedding night!

XIII

Most people will agree that there is so much that is unclean and base underlying the outward pomp of most weddings that the secret lovers' meetings of practically any youth and maiden are a great deal more elevated, morally speaking, than these semi-commercial bargains. And yet these newly-weds as a rule look as solemn and triumphant as if they had really achieved some great and useful feat. The marriage I have just described belongs, of course, to this category. The bride sipped her chocolate in her boudoir every morning with suitable languor, after which she changed her clothes two or three times. By about two in the afternoon the young couple got into their carriage and drove off to pay calls, as a result of which the visiting-cards of Comte Koulgacoff, Madame Digavouroff, *née* Comtesse Miloff, Lieutenant-General Ivan Petrovich Zakharyin, Serge Milkovsky, Pyotr Nikolayevich Trubnov, and many others, appeared in their marble vase. There was even the card of a certain Auto de Salvigo, a Spanish grandee. In a word here were represented the

flower and pride of Petersburg, who dazzle our vulgar sight with their charm and luxury on Nevsky Prospekt and at the Italian opera, and whose acquaintance Paulina's friend the Baroness cultivated so assiduously for my young couple. It would be hard to say to what extent all this tickled the vanity of my hero. But in any case he seemed to be adapting himself to his situation, which, though perhaps not of the most honourable, was nevertheless extremely brilliant. Pacing up and down his vast hall, lost in thought, his hands clasped behind him, the future Councillor of State could be divined in his dignified bearing, in the very cut of his frock-coat, and yet, as a conscientious author, I am forced to state that all this outward tranquillity was a mere parade, and in his innermost being Kalinovich suffered, thinking ceaselessly of Nastenka! The day after the wedding he went to Pavlovsk and dispatched twenty-five thousand rubles to her under cover of a short note in which he informed her of his marriage and made her only one request—to guard her health and not to curse him. He expected no reply to his letter, not even having affixed his address to it.

On the twenty-third of October a great ball was to be given by the Baroness in honour of the newly-wedded couple. The morning before this event Kalinovich was seated in his richly appointed study. A ring at the door was heard, followed by the sound of the familiar footsteps of the Count. Kalinovich made a face.

"I have come to say how d'you do and good-bye," cried the guest as he entered.

"How is that?" inquired Kalinovich languidly.

"I am going away. Our business about the privileges is finished—so now I'm off to the country, to work, to see to this, that and the other," replied the Count and paused as if something had been left unsaid. But Kalinovich understood.

"No doubt you have come about the money?" he suggested after a moment's silence.

"Yes, Yakov Vasilich—if you don't mind. I've got myself so involved just now that I need money like hell," said the Count in almost cringing tones.

Kalinovich yawned to conceal a smile of contempt and carelessly opened an unlocked drawer in his desk.

"Will you take it in bank-notes?" he asked.

"Just as you like," replied the Count, taking a note of hand out of his pocket and handing it to Kalinovich.

Kalinovich gave him a cheque for the sum.

"Precisely fifty-two thousand," he said.

"I trust you and thank you," said the Count, and thrust the note into his pocket, magnanimously refraining from looking at it.

For his part Kalinovich carelessly tore the note of hand into fragments, which he dropped on the floor, still uttering not a word, so that the Count began to feel a certain embarrassment.

"Well, and how is your Baroness?" he said. "I saw her the other day and talked to her about you."

"I have spoken to her myself," rejoined Kalinovich with a sneer. "I am to call on her today at two," he added, as if anxious to put an end to this conversation.

"Do so, do so!" exclaimed the Count. "Mind you don't let such an opportunity slip. Do her some trifling service—and the brightest prospects will open before you! Just think! Of course you will not go in for literature any more, so you will have to work, and that can't be done in Petersburg without backstairs influence. It's the only way in which anything of the slightest suitability can be attained."

An expression of open contempt passed over Kalinovich's features. Ever since the wedding he had begun to treat the Count's advice either inattentively or with contempt.

"But how's Paulina? Can I see her?" said the Count.

"No, she's not dressed," replied Kalinovich coldly.

"Then, good-bye," said the Count, slightly taken aback.

His host merely nodded, without rising from his seat. The Count went out. "Swine!" Kalinovich called after him, almost loud enough to be heard, and soon after left the house himself. Driving rapidly in his light curricie down Nevsky Prospekt, he leaned against the back of the seat, his knees crossed. In Morskaya Street the carriage stopped at the main entrance of a splendid mansion.

Kalinovich told the footman his name.

"Come in, please," he said, and announced the visitor by ringing a bell to the second floor.

Kalinovich could not help remembering his first visit to the General's widow. Once more he was entering a gentleman's house, but this time it was the house of a genuine aristocrat. The velvet curtains at the windows hung in imposing folds. The gilt, the furniture, the mirrors—all were ponderous with wealth. Tropical plants spread out their succulent greenness, almost darkening the windows. The parquet floor, laid in the time of Catherine the Great, seemed to be all in one piece. The very air was replete with ancient distinction. The Baroness detested all this old rubbish, but the Baron was inexorable and refused to change anything. The only rooms he allowed his wife to furnish as she liked were those in her own small domain, but he had not given her a penny to do it with. Despite this the Baroness had contrived to make for herself a little paradise, quite according to the fashion of the day. Kalinovich felt as if he were entering the dwelling of a fairy, as he stepped into her small drawing-room, where she deigned to receive him in matutinal *deshabille*, sipping her coffee.

"*Bonjour!*" she called out to him, smiling angelically, as the little Countess had once smiled at him, but with

the difference that there seemed to be more thought and feeling in her smile.

"*Bonjour, madame,*" he replied with dignified courtesy.

"*Désirez-vous du café?*" she asked.

"*Je vous prie,*" replied Kalinovich.

"Will you smoke?" went on the Baroness, pushing a silver goblet containing cigarettes towards him.

Kalinovich lit a cigarette.

"I have brought you a small sum," he began.

"Yes, yes, *merci,*" she gabbled, in slight embarrassment, and changed the subject immediately. "Tell me," she said, "have you been in love with Paulina a long time? I should very much like to know that."

"Oh, a very long time," replied Kalinovich with remarkable presence of mind.

"She's very sweet, very clever ... not good-looking, but what they call *une femme d'esprit*, just the sort that a clever man, a writer could fall in love with. *Voulez-vous prendre encore une tasse?*"

"*Non, merci,*" replied Kalinovich. "The money," he added, drawing a thick bundle of notes out of his pocket.

"Thank you. Ought I to give you a receipt or something?"

"Quite unnecessary," said Kalinovich.

"*Merci,*" replied the Baroness, absently slipping the money into the drawer of her writing-table.

For a few moments neither of them spoke.

"And I have a request to make to you, Baroness," began Kalinovich.

"I know, I know," she interrupted. "But let's see—how are we to set about it? The Duke, you know—he's very fond of me, afraid of me, even. Let me think. If you were to go to him just now with a letter from me you may be lost in the crowd. He will want to speak to you, but will probably be unable to. I'll tell you what! I can simply

take you up to him at my ball, introduce you and tell him straight out what we want."

"If that is possible, why, of course," said Kalinovich.

"Certainly it's possible. Surely you know nothing else is ever spoken about at Petersburg balls! Nothing but business—such a horrid town!" said the Baroness.

Just then the sound of spurs was heard. Kalinovich rose.

"Adieu till tomorrow," said the Baroness.

Kalinovich bowed.

"Tell Paulina that she simply must wear her white dress. *Elle est magnifique.*"

"Thank you," said Kalinovich, and took his departure. The courteous smile which had lit up his features during the visit vanished the moment he found himself in his curricule. He wished he could drink himself into a stupor so as not to be obliged to see and understand what was going on around him. When he got home, Paulina, as if to increase his irritation, came to meet him in a new quilted gown, and asked him if she looked nice.

"Very nice," he replied, grimacing, and half an hour later they were walking arm in arm down Nevsky Prospekt.

A ball, a ball! What a fascinating, exquisite word that used to be! Did not Pushkin extol the ardent youth, the crush, the noise, the pleasure, the elegance of the ladies' dresses? But we, children of our age, are not to be taken in so easily. We know what a ball is—especially a society ball. One would need to have the childlike simplicity of a certain young lieutenant I know, who has not even acquired a discriminating taste for food, and see things through his eyes, to enable us to believe the Baroness when she assures us so sweetly that she is giving this ball for the public weal, and not just to postpone the payment of a certain little bill for thirty thousand rubles or so—a matter she intends to discuss with certain bigwigs to the

celestial strains of Lyadov's band. Just look at that gentleman, his coat buttoned up like Mr. Dombey's all the way down, of whom the doctors say that his liver is rotting away from the daily dose of spleen with which he drenches it—surely that serpent has not come here merely for the sake of amusement! And you, sweet, fair-haired lady mingling carelessly with the crowd—I can see how the memory of the nonsense your husband uttered a few days ago during a debate, in which he fatally exposed his abysmal stupidity, so that you will probably not continue to enjoy for long your present splendid position, is gnawing at your vitals. And you, Your Excellency, why such efforts to overcome your servile clerk's soul, why so careful to hold up your head over your starched collar, not bending it earthwards at every step despite an almost insuperable inclination to do so? It is all, I am sure, from the vain desire to show yourself off as a free-thinker in front of that bearded gentleman leaning pensively against a column. As for you, Madame Khmarova, despite my profound respect for you, despite the exaggerated modesty and simplicity of your ball dress and the meekness of the glance you cast over this vain, bedizened crowd, I must tell you frankly that I do not believe in your Christian submissiveness, not I! The insidious serpent is even now nibbling at your heart. You are ready to tear limb from limb and stamp underfoot as if he were some loathsome vermin that brilliant general seated at his ease in an arm-chair, his curly head resting against the back of it. He has been speaking French for half an hour better than any Frenchman could, and his every thought is adorned with witticisms. You know very well that he has publicly designated you a hypocrite, and has done your reputation much harm. And you, peaceful warrior, courageously enduring so many blows aimed at your person, and bearing the weight of such notoriety that when somebody abused you in society, and one of your clients remarked

that he had no right, not knowing you, to do so, another sent society into ecstasies by remarking: "Nobody knows the devil, either, and yet everyone abuses him." You have endured all this, but now even you, with nothing but borrowed plumes left to you, no longer conscious of the power once embodied in your signature, even you feel ill at ease. You have only come here from necessity, for the sole purpose of keeping your eagle eye on your four red-cheeked lambkins, lest their hearts be moved by vulgar emotions for some pleb or other. Finally, I press your hand in all sincerity, oh, gentle youth, unfortunate victim of that threatening goddess, your mama, who has sent you here to seek the hand and heart of a brilliant lady-in-waiting, whereas your heart yearns towards a small apartment in Peskee Street, the abode of your life's treasure, though you do not venture to dream of adorning her modest name one day with your noble coat-of-arms. But above all I pity you, honest man, you scion of a noble line! How solitary you stand, dizzy with affairs, aware that there are a dozen individuals ready to thrust a dagger in your heart for your attack on the evils that have peacefully existed so long. Not one of you victims of ambition, filthy lucre, refined depravity and your own idle existence, not one of you, I say, knows the true meaning of existence.

At last, shortly before midnight, the young couple arrived. The sole cause of their unpunctuality was the toilet of the bride, who had begun to have her hair done as long ago as six o'clock, but who could not decide upon a coiffure that she felt suited her. She had her hair done and undone again and again, she scolded, began waving it herself, burned herself with the tongs, threw them in the hairdresser's face, changed her dress half a dozen times, tore her slippers and at last burst into tears. Kalinovich, to whom the sight of his wife in a temper was new, finally lost his own.

"Either you dress this very moment, or I shall go without you!" he shouted in tones that showed Paulina she had better submit, and she completed her toilet in secret agitation, this time without the slightest taste. When they entered the ball-room the hostess went to meet them immediately.

"You're late, my dear!" she said.

"I didn't feel quite well," said Paulina.

When Kalinovich's eyes fell on the droves of beautiful and attractive women, his heart sank at the sight of his wife's crooked figure, but he kept himself well in hand and bowed right and left. The Spanish grandee pressed his hand, the wife of Senator Ridvinov, looking at him with narrowed eyes through her lorgnette, bowed to him from afar. The fair-haired Lieutenant Shamovsky, an extremely fastidious young man, came up to him, and bowing, begged the honour of his acquaintance.

"Are you writing anything now?" he asked.

"No," was the monosyllabic reply.

The lieutenant paused for a moment, and then, thrusting out his chest, asked:

"Tell me, who is now the greatest author?"

"I suppose each one thinks he is," replied Kalinovich. The lieutenant laughed.

"Very likely," he said, and would have continued, but Kalinovich, seeing no necessity for prolonging the conversation, turned away as politely as he could, and addressed the hostess, who happened to be near by.

"Is the Duke here?" he asked.

"Yes. Don't lose sight of me. We'll bring it off," she said and passed on.

Kalinovich thanked her with a smile and went up to Madame Digavouroff, *née* Comtesse Miloff, to invite her to dance the quadrille with him.

The days in which ladies and gentlemen exchanged

brilliant and witty remarks while dancing have long gone by. Our society writer, Count Odoyevsky, wittily prophesied, as long ago, I think, as the 'thirties, that with the development of society true dandies would quite stop talking altogether. Nowadays silent self-congratulation at finding himself amidst the cream of society is quite enough for a decent man.

Absorbed in precisely such musings, our hero scarcely uttered a dozen words to his partner. Finding himself a member of such society, he reflected, not without satisfaction, that scarcely three months ago he had only been able to peep through the windows at these exquisite feminine heads and excessively correct masculine figures as they whirled past. These pleasing reflections, however, vanished instantly when, glancing towards a corner of the ball-room, he caught sight of the bearded gentleman, still standing beside a pillar, and next to him—*Belavin*. Kalinovich's heart stood still. He would have gladly given half his enormous fortune to get rid of this witness to his misconduct, who might denounce him with the words: "*Thou art a villain!*" in the face of the aristocratic assembly. "And God knows I am no villain," thought Kalinovich in anguish. "If only Belavin could see how I suffer!" His first idea was to go up to Belavin and at all costs to open his heart to him, and implore, demand that he should not despise him, for he did not deserve it. With such thoughts he approached him, saying as carelessly as he could:

"Good evening, Mikhailo Sergeich."

"Good evening," was the reply.

Kalinovich sensed profound contempt in his friend's gentle voice. He stood there, not knowing what to do next. Belavin surveyed him from head to foot.

"I must give you back your money," he said, taking from his pocket the note Kalinovich had sent to Nastenka.

Kalinovich had no choice but to take it and stuff it hastily into his own pocket. Belavin looked away, apparently embarrassed at having to fulfil such a commission.

But Kalinovich did not go away, and stood shifting his weight from one foot to the other.

"Why? How?" he said, but Belavin paid no more attention to him, and turned to the bearded gentleman.

"Just now you said Chichikov did not deserve the moral chastisement meted out to him by the author, for it was society itself which had not awakened in him the idea of honour. But what could society do with such a poltroon?"

"It might have restrained him," said the bearded gentleman.

"With us it's quite the opposite, the whole tendency of our society is to keep people down," put in Kalinovich humbly.

"Tendency, rubbish!" said Belavin scornfully. "It's nothing to do with any tendency—it's simply a case of beastly disposition. And what is conscience in such people? A mere shadow thrown as a second thought by education, by decent society, on a screen. A man may glance at it every now and then, under the influence of fear, but his natural instincts get the upper hand. Or he may come to the shocking conclusion that conscience is really only a convention. The inherent good in a man is always spontaneous, expresses itself involuntarily; martyrs to honour and to what is good are to be found in all societies, from the most barbarous to the most highly developed societies. The blind do not mislead the man with sight, it is he who leads them. It's no good blaming the mirror—it's the face that's crooked," concluded Belavin emphatically, and with the ease of a man accustomed to live in good society, he moved away and sat down beside a lady.

Kalinovich was crushed. He understood perfectly that Belavin had purposely exaggerated, in order to wound him.

"The Baroness is asking for you," said Lieutenant Sharnovsky, approaching him.

"Ah!" said Kalinovich, casting a roving glance over the room.

"She's in the second drawing-room," said the young man. "Shall I show you the way?"

Kalinovich followed him.

"I know all the ins and outs here," boasted the lieutenant who did in fact know the disposition of the rooms in all the grand houses he frequented, down to the least detail.

They found the hostess in a small, cosy room talking to the old Duke, the expression of whose face was still more imposing than before. With his white tie and the stars on the lapel of his frock-coat, he seemed to Kalinovich like a statue of Jupiter placed in a mysterious niche. The Baroness, slight and slender as a doe, sat beside him.

"Here he is," she said, gesturing towards the approaching Kalinovich.

My hero gave a courteous bow.

"I think we met in the house of the lady who is now your wife," said the old man.

"Quite so, Your Excellency," said Kalinovich. "I had the honour of meeting you there once."

"Come and sit here," said the Baroness.

Kalinovich obeyed.

"The Baroness tells me," began the old man, "that you would like to work for me."

"If Your Excellency would only allow me to hope," began Kalinovich, but the Duke cut him short with a nod.

"She tells me," he continued, "that you do not require a salary, but would like to have some prominent post.

"I have more than enough for my needs," put in Kalinovich, but again the old man checked him with a movement of his head.

"You are, however, an author, you write and that sort of thing—"

"Yes, I have written a book."

"That's all right, quite all right. But when you enter the service I would nevertheless request you to give it up. Moreover, as an official, as an individual working for the government, it is your duty to break off all connections with those gentlemen who, between you and me, have a bad reputation."

Kalinovich raised no objections to this, and said nothing.

"Have you introduced him to Alexander Petrovich?" the old man asked the Baroness.

"Not yet, but I will," she said.

"Yes, do. It will be better, and you can tell him you have already spoken to me and I wish him to remind me of it tomorrow."

"*Merci*," responded the Baroness.

The old man replied to this with a smile and a conversation was carried on between them chiefly by insinuations.

Kalinovich understood he was in the way, and retired.

He could not get Belavin out of his head. "What right have these gentlemen from their lofty utopian heights to criticize people who have their way in life to make?" he asked himself. "He was probably born to cambric and lace. It's all very well for such people to develop magnanimous ideas, and at the same time do nothing. He has probably never lifted a finger to put into practice a single

one of his fine phrases, but has merely, like a sea-gull with clipped wings, stood calmly on the warm sand of the seashore, shaking his head mournfully at the ships wrecked in their struggle with the waves. Whether I am good or bad, at least I crave activity. I was not born to sit with folded arms. Can it be they do not know that for every good deed a thousand basenesses must be committed? And what right has this man to weigh my relations with that girl and contemptuously fling at me money I won in blood and sweat for the happiness of this same woman?"

Thus it was that my hero tried to console his *amour propre* with conventional moralizings. But a voice deep in his soul told him that this was unworthy, and he bruised himself perpetually against the truths advanced by Belavin. He resolved whatever happened to force him to take the money back and dispose of it however he liked, since he had taken part in this matter. With phrases thought out beforehand he went to look for his friend and found him going downstairs.

"Monsieur Belavin!" he cried, running up to the balustrade. "Take the money! Neither have you the right to return it, nor I the right to keep it."

"That'll do. Keep it!" replied Belavin and he went out of the house, banging the front door behind him.

It would have required superhuman patience to endure such an affront. My hero's first thought was to ask one of the young men in the ball-room to be his second and to send a challenge to his enemy. But in truth, though by no means a coward, he considered duelling absolute madness. Besides, say what you will, it is no trifle to have the barrel of a pistol aimed at you, and all because some gentleman or other has failed to respect your person.

While these reasonable cogitations were cooling the anger in Kalinovich's soul, he heard the voice of his hostess beside him, saying:

"Monsieur Kalinovich, where have you been? Naughty man! Come with me, I want to introduce you to your new chief. I've just been talking to him about you."

Thus speaking the Baroness took him by the arm. Kalinovich followed her.

"I'll sit you down to cards opposite him—lose to him. He likes that."

"Likes it, does he?" said Kalinovich ironically.

"Adores it, such a bad man!" replied the hostess.

"Monsieur Kalinovich, Alexander Petrovich," she said, going up to the director, whose acquaintance we have already made.

"We are acquainted," he said, holding out his hand to Kalinovich.

"I didn't know that," said the Baroness.

"I have had the honour to call on His Excellency," said Kalinovich.

"You will find your table in the drawing-room, gentlemen," said the hostess in conclusion.

The director and Kalinovich measured one another with their eyes like two warriors whose paths have crossed.

"Did you get married?" asked the director, the first to speak.

"Yes, and there is my wife," replied Kalinovich, and he pointed out Paulina, who was sauntering by on the arm of another lady, to the director. Despite her lopsided figure, Paulina knew how to bow condescendingly, and the director, returning her bow, fixed his gaze on her enormous diamonds, which was just what Kalinovich had intended him to do.

"Well, let's go to our arena," said the director, when the ladies had passed by.

"By all means," agreed Kalinovich.

Long before supper-time a casual rumour had got about that Kalinovich had lost two thousand rubles to his opponent, but, to do my hero justice, I must admit that this

was caused more by lack of interest on his part than by intention, for the intolerable image of the smiling Belavin haunted him like a ghost.

A fortnight later Titular Councillor Kalinovich's promotion to the rank of Private Secretary to— was published in the orders of the day. This time his superior had made no mistake—my hero was a brilliant success in his new post, a year later he was made a Collegiate Assessor, after which he was awarded the order of Anna (Third Degree), and two years later the rank of Court Councillor was bestowed upon him. After having been Private Secretary for four years he was made a Collegiate Councillor, received the order of Vladimir, and finally became acting Vice-Governor of the M. Gubernia.



Part Four

I

KALINOVICH was appointed to that very gubernia in which he had once been an insignificant school inspector. The reader may perhaps not be unaware that every gubernia in our country pursues its own policy, which, needless to say, has nothing in common with that published in the *Debats*, the *Siècle*, and *The Times*. We do not care a jot whether Philip or Napoleon reigns in France, and as far as we are concerned the Queen of England can

marry the Sultan of Turkey, so long as there is no recruiting for the army. But the names of our ruling authorities, the choice of our governor—these are matters very close to our hearts. This policy is discussed in taverns and wine-cellars by secretaries, senior clerks and other minor bureaucratic officials, discussed eagerly, with profound agitation; it is natural for their own well-being is at stake. The educated section of the gentry discuss this policy, too, and with a great deal more interest than they give to the discussion of the policies they read about in the newspapers. It dictates the activities of the various authorities, and may be said to guide the strictly impartial eye of the public prosecutor where to look.

Any changes or uncertainty in this respect bear most heavily upon the so-called "reliable" elements, who can always manage to come to terms with the worst of governors so long as they can be sure he will stay. And I am glad to say that the gubernia we are interested in was quite fortunate in that respect. Lieutenant-General Bazaryev had been Governor for the last fifteen years. This had been well for the gubernia, and well for him, though, of course, there is no life, especially for a provincial governor, without its sorrows. And therefore a few thorns were the lot of the Lieutenant-General, too. He had had more or less serious conflicts with the Marshal of the Gubernia over the failure of the Governor's lady to pay the proper calls, for this lady bore herself, much to her husband's detriment, like a kind of empress. But the Governor himself, thanks to a way of life which was at once frank and perfectly suited to his post, got on so well with the gentry that, simply to oblige him, they black-balled the Marshal, though later on one of the prosecutors took into his head to oppose him, and began making complaints about the administration of the gubernia. But it ended in the prosecutor being sent to some remote gubernia, in the interests of the service. The last and most important battle

took place between the Governor and his former Vice-Governor, who had at first held his tongue with the utmost propriety, having owed his promotion solely to his marriage with an illegitimate granddaughter of some aristocrat, but who suddenly began without rhyme or reason to put obstacles in the way of the sale of licences, shouting and boasting all over the place that he would bring low the Governor and his vodka merchants, so that certain weak minds hesitated, and were almost ready to believe him, while unreliable subversive elements began to raise their heads extremely hardily and cheerfully—but not for long. Bazaryev behaved all the time as if he knew nothing about it, left the fat Chetverikov in possession of all the licence in the gubernia, to defend himself, which he did so effectually that in three weeks' time the Vice-Governor was made an honorary member of the Ministry. And the Governor received his award the very next New Year's day. In a word, like gold refined in the furnace, the old man emerged from all his battles with fresh honours, and his latest victory bore obvious testimony to the strength of his position in Petersburg and finally won the love, the respect of those on the spot. It was obvious that he was unbreakable. But, say what you will, there is always something sinister, something fatal when we have reached the highest summits. . . . The question of the kind of fellow the new Vice-Governor would turn out to be gave rise to painful and alarmed reflections in many minds. Fortunately the answers to it were of the most favourable.

It is common knowledge that all our great men are preceded and followed by certain appendages known as "their own men," in whom those who are "not their own men" see their ruin. The Vice-Governor was preceded by an individual from the appropriate department, a callow youth whose complexion suggested that he already suffered from piles, and who, in his foppish attire, exces-

sive slenderness, tone and manners strongly resembled the young Kalinovich; he was no doubt himself a potential vice-governor, though as yet nothing more, it was said, than a potential secretary of the Gubernatorial Board. The young man himself, taciturn, like all Petersburg officials, gave no hint of his ambitions, confining his activities to the renting of a dwelling for the Vice-Governor in the best part of the town, on the embankment—a huge stone-built mansion, which he began to get ready for its new occupant.

"The new Vice-Governor must be a rich man," it was declared in the town.

"If he starts on such a grand scale, he'll soon be fleecing us," others privately decided. But the first really to throw any light on the matter was the architect of the gubernia, a man who looked very stupid and did not know much about his profession, but who had a remarkable faculty for ingratiating himself with his superiors well in advance, even when these were a thousand miles away. Without much thought for the conventions, he went straight to the site of repairs and asked with no preliminaries:

"Are you getting the premises into repair for His Excellency?"

"Yes," said the young man, not removing the cigarette from his mouth.

"The contractors here are very obstinate and very expensive," continued the architect.

"They're all right," replied the young man surlily, staring fixedly at the points of his polished boots.

The architect asked, with a meaning look:

"Would it suit His Excellency to have the work done by a penal battalion? The commander, Captain Timkov, who is a kind of subordinate of mine, is a fine fellow. He undertakes this sort of thing for many prominent persons among his superiors, for it costs him nothing. Say fifteen

men are required for such and such a job, he enters the cost in their registers, and sends forty. There are plenty of them, the rogues! Anyhow it is perfectly legal to make them work. And if His Excellency chooses I could give the order immediately."

"His Excellency does not choose," replied the young man with obvious sarcasm, and flinging the butt of his cigarette on the floor, he went into the inner rooms.

The architect went away discomfited.

"Bad!" he said and, getting into his chaise, he drove off to his office.

"I've just been at the Vice-Governor's house," he said. "They've sent for me to look after the repairs."

"Well, old man, what's the news?" asked a staff officer.

"The news? From all I could see and hear he must be an extraordinarily severe person."

"They say he's a fine fellow," lisped the Deputy of the Nobility, actually putting down the *Northern Bee*, which he had been perusing ever since the morning.

To praise a new chief is one of the leading characteristics of officials, and their manner of doing so places them in one of three categories: to the first of these belong the youngest and it must be admitted the most decent, who praise without quite knowing why they do so, simply because it's a new chief and not the old one, whose physiognomy they are heartily sick of. In the second category come the diplomatically-inclined, who in their hearts don't like chiefs at all, but praise the new one because after all it's the best thing to do. (Who knows which of us he will take a fancy to? It might be me.) And they praise so as not to have to change their views later. Finally, there is the third category, the simplest of all, those whose very servility is disinterested, being a kind of lyrical impulse in their hearts. These only praise because he *is* a chief, a being whom they in all sincerity love. The secretary of the commission was one of these. When he heard the members

of the commission praise the new Vice-Governor he fell into a kind of ecstasy and, with a heart too full for reticence, he immediately retailed the praises to his fellow employees, who in their turn spread them throughout the wooden houses where they had their home and families, the taverns and wine-cellars where they drank of an evening. The rumour reached other offices in due course, and two clerks from the Gubernatorial Board, who had been persecuted by the former Vice-Governor, became so enthusiastic that they started wrestling, at first for fun, but finally, warming up, till they tore each other's shirt-fronts, after which they drew blood, and had to be taken to the police-station. The old crones gossiped at morning service to others of their kind about the worthy new Vice-Governor, while the younger women chattered of him in the market-place. "They say he's a good man, Ma'am. A very good man, and all our officials rejoice," they assured one another. "Of course they rejoice, Ma'am. It's so important to know he's a good man!" came the rejoinder, and so on and so forth. Everyone was interested, everyone praised.

In the higher circles of society no less flattering reports of Kalinovich were spread, the more credible in that they originated almost with the Governor himself. Every Thursday evening from time immemorial, the Governor was at home to the members of his little court, that is to say, to his intimates. At one of these Thursdays the wife of the President of the Exchequer, a most delightful lady, and still quite young, was as usual present. In comparison with her, the Governor's lady seemed almost old, but she had an extraordinarily majestic presence and seemed born to pay ceremonious visits and sit in her gubernatorial drawing-room, where a platform had actually been built against the back wall for her to mount when she wished to be at her most majestic. On such occasions she looked like one of those scraggy stage duchesses who are led out

in ballets and operas by thick-legged dukes and ensconced in gilt arm-chairs to look on and admire the dancing crowd. The two ladies could not abide one another, and their friendship was purely diplomatic, but they both worked hard to maintain a show of cordial relations.

Among the men present was the Marshal of the Nobility whom we have already met at the Count's house and who of late, fired with ardent longings for a "Crowned Anna" to hang round his neck, had been making up to the Governor for all he was worth, hovering round him from morning till night, whenever he got a chance. A little apart from the rest sat the manager of the Gubernatorial Office, a real intimate who, though already on the road to riches, still did not feel quite at ease in the Governor's house. One of his self-imposed duties was to leap up whenever the hostess inclined her head and tiptoe into the ball-room to tell the servants to hand round coffee or ices. His wife, a red-cheeked young woman, sat there too, bending over her embroidery, but the Governor's wife paid no attention whatever to her. The Governor himself, however, regarded her most affectionately. He was a remarkably brisk old gentleman, with his frock-coat unbuttoned, and heavy flapping epaulettes, so distinguished-looking that when he stood up in church, in his white trousers and Hessian boots, many most charming ladies declared it was still perfectly possible to fall in love with him. It was said that the young wife of the manager realized this possibility better than anyone else. It cannot be claimed that the conversation between all these people was exactly lively. Everyone knows that ladies of the rank of generals' wives are no schoolgirls. The Marshal seemed to be under a strain, and the Governor himself, who had just signed a huge pile of official registers, was obviously tired.

"Have a cigar?" he said to the Marshal.

"The ladies won't object?" asked the latter, accepting the proffered cigar.

"Not at all! I'm thoroughly trained," said the hostess graciously.

"Not bad cigars!" said the Governor.

"Excellent!" agreed the Marshal, fanning a wisp of smoke towards his nose, and reflecting not without envy: "It's all very well to smoke cigars like that when the vodka licence dealer presents you with them by the thousand."

At about nine o'clock Engineer-Lieutenant Khovsky arrived—a favourite of the Governor's wife because he played the piano so well. He brought a most interesting subject of conversation to enliven the assembled company.

"I've just come from the landing-stage, Your Excellency," he said, going straight up to the Governor. "The Vice-Governor's furniture has arrived."

"Ah!" said the Governor.

"It's marvellous!" said the Lieutenant, chiefly addressing the ladies. "All upholstered in crimson velvet with black flowers, the usual thing, of course, but wonderful quality. And there are candelabras, crystal lustres and, last but not least, huge pictures of the Flemish school. I looked at some of them, and though of course it's hard to be sure, I think they must be originals. Simply marvellous!"

"What's so marvellous about that? Everybody has them," put in the Marshal's wife, unwilling to admit the thought that anyone's drawing-room could be better than her own.

The Marshal seemed to be smiling to himself.

"I don't know what information *you* have, Your Excellency," he began uncertainly, "but I admit I looked in on Count Ivan on my way here. The new Vice-Governor's wife is a relation of the Count and the Count can't say too much for him in his favour. 'The very fact that he has such a fortune,' he says, 'is so clever, so well-informed... a man of such character, so resolute...' Of course he may be piling it on because he's a relation."

"Not a bit! Not the least!" declared the Governor. "He belongs to the cream of society—the best man in the Ministry, and I asked for him and no other, because it's high time I had an assistant after my own heart."

"Precisely, Your Excellency, for you only want everything for the best," chimed in the Marshal.

"Only for the best," corroborated the Governor.

The manager listened eagerly to this talk and before the Marshal could sit down at the card-table, he went up to him.

"Were you speaking to His Excellency about the new Vice-Governor?" he asked.

"Yes. Your old man is very pleased," replied the Marshal.

"I should think he *was*," said the manager, with an ecstatic expression on his face. "His Excellency gets thousands of papers from the office alone, and now at least he won't have to worry about them, knowing what a man he has. The fact that they responded to his application by sending him the person he chose himself is of the utmost importance."

"I should say it is. It means—he's powerful," agreed the Marshal.

"Very powerful. Thank God, we can now work zealously and in peace," contributed the manager, half-closing his eyes.

After playing a few rubbers at the Governor's, the Marshal went to visit some colleague of his, who had been playing cards for four days in a hotel bedroom. A few players were seated round a table littered with torn and dog-eared cards. The faces of almost all were smeared with chalk and distorted by their furtive sufferings and rejoicings, by lack of sleep and by drink. Some were in frock-coats, some in dressing-gowns, some in their shirt sleeves. But here too the talk was all of the new Vice-Governor.

"Where do you spring from?" asked the host, who had lost all he had at the card table but was nevertheless stretched out luxuriously on the sofa.

"From the Governor's," replied the Marshal, smiling ironically, as befitted his "liberal" reputation. "Everybody's talking about the new Vice-Governor."

"Tell us about it, old chap!" said the Councillor to the Gubernatorial Board.

"What's there to tell? Your old man praises him, he's pleased," replied the Marshal.

"Isn't it Kalinovich?" asked the banker, a black-browed gentleman with a splenetic and misanthropical air.

"Kalinovich it is! What about him?" rejoined the Marshal in slightly injured tones.

The banker smiled.

"He'll show you what's what! Praise him, do they? He inspected our gubernia when I was there, and gave us a trouncing that won't soon be forgotten."

"Oh, you're a sceptic!" said the sybaritic host, wrapping his Paris-made dressing-gown round him.

"Wait till you see him! The swine has a face to turn milk sour. He'll ride rough-shod over us all."

Nobody believed the banker, of course, and favourable reports of Kalinovich continued to be spread.

II

Some three weeks later eight post-horses harnessed to an English family coach flew over the roads to the principal town of the gubernia. The new Vice-Governor was on his way. Round his neck there hung the Cross of Vladimir, once the object of his dearest dreams.

Ahead of his carriage, half-dead with fatigue, galloped the superintendent of police in his rickety phaeton, holding on to his three-cornered hat to prevent it from flying off his head, and endeavouring to lean gallantly on his

meager sword. The Governor himself had sent him, so that his new assistant should be met with all possible respect. But the honour seemed to be lost on my hero, who was very different from the dandified youth we had met when he first entered government service. He sat in his carriage, his head, on which the hair was greying evenly, bent. There were deep wrinkles in his sallow cheeks, but the glance of his grey eyes seemed to be steadier than before.

Paulina, seated at his side, had also aged and was as lean as a mummy. Kalinovich had not spoken a word to his wife, or paid her any attention whatever since they had left the last posting station. When the carriage stopped in front of his house the superintendent, leaping from his phaeton, tried to help the new Vice-Governor out.

"None of that!" said Kalinovich, blushing slightly, and then, as if to soften the asperity of his words, added: "Thank you very much. But you shouldn't trouble. I'm sure you have plenty of other things to do." With these words he turned away and came face to face with the chief of police, a red-nosed colonel who was a past-master at his profession. Saluting and stepping forward two paces, he presented a report on conditions in the town. This was not strictly speaking required by the law, but the chief of police was determined to be on the safe side.

"Will you call on His Excellency today or tomorrow?" he asked, following the Vice-Governor slavishly.

"Neither today nor tomorrow. I'm tired," replied Kalinovich.

The face of the chief of police reflected surprise, which, however, like a good subordinate he tried to conceal, and took his leave. Later in the day members of the Gubernatorial Board made an attempt to appear before the new chief, but were not received. In four days' time the first visit to the Governor was made. To begin with, the chief of police galloped up, accompanied by his Cossack, to

inform the Governor that the new Vice-Governor was on his way. The manager, waiting in the entrance hall with his report, began hastily buttoning his tunic. An adjutant who had been reading military orders put them aside. The official on duty combed his hair in front of the mirror.

Kalinovich drove up in the prettiest little phaeton drawn by a pair of small but high-bred stallions. Throwing off his beaver cloak in the hall, the Vice-Governor appeared in a civil uniform whose cut and design betrayed a Petersburg tailor. Then, bowing civilly to everyone, with the manner and tone of a Petersburg official, he stepped rapidly into the study where, his head bent in the respectful submission of a subordinate, he introduced himself to the Governor:

"Very glad to make your acquaintance, esteemed Yakov Vasilich," said the Governor a little stiffly, inviting Kalinovich, however, with prompt courtesy to take a seat and sitting down himself.

"Tell me, how is Petersburg? As noisy and busy as ever?"

"The same as ever," replied Kalinovich.

"Delightful city!" continued the Governor emphatically. "Have you seen your fellow members here, I wonder," he added.

"They called on me, Your Excellency, but I felt a little unwell after my journey, and was unable to receive them."

"I see. That's quite in order, but I trust you will allow me to present them to you today."

Kalinovich thanked him with an inclination of the head.

"Perhaps you would even like to inspect the Gubernatorial Office in order to have a firmer base for your future activities?"

"I was just going to mention it, Your Excellency."

"Delighted! It is just what I should wish. I am not one of those governors who believe, since I have been at the

head of affairs fifteen years, that everything must be perfect. On the contrary—I am a human being, and the more you open my eyes the more grateful I shall be to you. No doubt much has been overlooked, and there is too much delay everywhere. All I would ask you, as my nearest assistant, is that we should by our combined efforts endeavour to amend all that. I have heard so much of you from Petersburg that I am ready to be convinced in advance of our success.”

Kalinovich again thanked him with a silent bow.

“I am, however, bound to warn you,” continued the Governor, “that it is no easy matter to rule this district and occupy the post of Governor. In reality each department reigns as if it were a separate duchy. Take, for example, the Chamber of State Property . . . or, say, the Chamber of Finance . . . the Law Courts . . . and last but not least your Gubernatorial Office with its police superintendents, its mayors . . . and you will soon see that none of these authorities likes any other to interfere with it or show off in regard to the simplest and most ordinary affairs. Well and good, let each one mind its own business, but no—they say to the Governor: ‘You’re the chief, you’re the head of the gubernia.’ ”

“I think you have dealt with everything very successfully, Your Excellency,” remarked Kalinovich.

“Dealt with every one of them to the best of my ability,” answered the Governor with a triumphant note in his voice. “Why should I make mischief? What for? Recruiting headquarters have just started activities—mind you look into their papers! And here is a whole pile of applications from state-owned peasants with regard to various abuses on the part of their chiefs, but there’s nothing to be done about this, you can only do yourself harm. A court-adjutant has been here a whole week to look into it on the spot and I hear he has quite settled down in the office manager’s house for the last three days, and con-

descends to—er—study music with his wife. And what's the Governor to do about it?"

Kalinovich's only reply was a smile.

"And then there's the dissenters," resumed the Governor in much lower tones. "What about them? Of course we Orthodox Christians realize that these sects are a curse to society, and every subject of the Russian Tsar in my rank, say, would like to eradicate this evil. But you've got to know whom you can persecute. He's a perverter, they say of some rich farmer or merchant. But he enjoys great respect, they say, many people trade with him on the quiet. And there is not yet the slightest proof that he really is a perverter. Nothing but gossip about some Maria Grigoryeva who attended the Orthodox church till she was fifty, and stopped when she was sixty because some Fyodor Kuzmich perverted her—that's all. And what if this is true? What if he did bring a few blind, wall-eyed, lame old maids to his way of thinking for the salvation of their souls? Even so, in my opinion, all this evil must be set in the balance against the good he does society. For my part I can definitely state that wherever you come across a man like that, he is always a benefactor to the whole district. He gives out grain and lends money at interest. And if he should happen to have some little factory, he gives employment. Or he finds other occupations for the people, buys mushrooms from the poor for pickling, and then sells them to those Milyutin shops where just such another heathen as himself sits behind the counter. And so I shall always value people like that, whatever is said of me. Rovers, pilgrims, who support spiritual heresy by their own false teachings, are quite another thing, of course. I never let them say a word. Wherever they turn up I put them in gaol, and keep them locked up as long as possible."

If the Governor had been less absorbed in his subject, and had paid more attention to his assistant's face, he

would have seen on it a smile not altogether flattering to himself.

"What are the subordinate officials like, Your Excellency?" asked Kalinovich, apparently desirous of leading the Governor to further frank admissions.

"Decent fellows," replied the Governor, "I have endeavoured, at least in my own department, to organize things as well as possible, and I am very strict with my subordinates. My subordinate must be a replica of myself. My rule is: never to look at their papers and documents when making a tour of inspection, that's all nonsense, of secondary importance. I study the district, take into consideration its demands. If there are no complaints of an official, it means he's satisfactory. Of course one has to take into consideration the complainant. Not only do I give no encouragement to the tale-bearing of low-class slanderers, or discharged clerks, but I try to shut their mouths. It's a kind of infection—only let it spread, and nobody will have any peace. But if it's a landowner, a merchant, a decent person, then it means the official has tried his patience too far, and then I show no mercy. The gubernia does not exist for us, we exist for the gubernia. And this means we must give satisfaction. That's my system."

It would have been hard to determine from the expression on Kalinovich's face the extent to which he agreed with this system.

"Twelve o'clock. Time to go," said the Governor, and rang a little bell.

It was answered by an adjutant with his cap in his hand. The General gave him orders in French to have the carriage brought round, and proposed to the Vice-Governor, if this suited him, that they should go together to the Gubernatorial Office. They were delayed several minutes in the waiting-room by petitioners: a retired staff captain, in uniform, holding a three-cornered hat with a feather,

brought a complaint against his wife, who, as well as running away from him, had carried off the double-matress bought with his own money. Then came a wrinkled blear-eyed little old woman who threw herself at the Governor's feet the moment she caught sight of him, wailing abuse of her son who had hit her over the head with a flute. Obviously wishing to show his new assistant the interest he took in all matters pertaining to the service, the Governor questioned them both fairly minutely and handed their written petitions to the adjutant.

"Extraordinary how coarse morals still are," he said, going out of the house with Kalinovich. "This one beats his old mother, that one grieves, not because his wife has left him, but because she has carried off the feather matress. And all these matters must be dealt with somehow or other."

They were waited for in the porch by the chief of police, standing at attention. The Governor waved his hand majestically for the carriage to be brought up to the door, and would not hear of Kalinovich getting into his own phaeton.

"Come with me! We can talk on the way."

Kalinovich complied with his wish. The chief of police and his Cossack galloped ahead, and the Governor maintained (obviously for the sake of appearances) an animated, almost intimate conversation with the Vice-Governor. The officials or merchants they happened to encounter on the way, all of whom greeted them with something like a military salute, could not fail to remark their friendliness; the young wife of one of the private secretaries, driving by in a chaise, made her coachman go at a foot-pace, and gazed long after the two bigwigs. At the entrance to the Court House a mournful-looking usher, with no coat over his uniform, shivered in the chill autumn weather. He was destined to die soon, partly of a cold, partly of sheer fright.

"Good morning, my good man," said the Governor, tripping up the steps, his head held high.

Anyone who has known the agreeable sensation of ascending the steps of a government department in the capacity of a superior will of course understand that a man would need to have very stout nerves not to be conscious at such a moment of his own dignity. But my hero seemed to feel nothing of this, and to be a prey to the gloomiest thoughts. He walked on with his head bent, keeping close behind his chief.

Everyone in the office was standing at attention.

"Decent fellows, all!" whispered the Governor.

At the door of the main room the members of the office staff stood to greet the new Vice-Governor.

"How long have you been an official, Sergei Nikolaich?" the Governor asked.

"Eighteen years, Your Excellency," replied the latter meekly.

"And how many reproofs have come from the Senate to my office?" continued the Governor.

"As far as I remember, not one," replied the official.

The Governor smiled.

"Not one—not bad," he said, drawing himself up proudly. "Our assessor is a graduate of Moscow University. And we are indebted to Valentin Osipich for a municipal economy such as probably is not to be found in any other gubernia," he concluded, pointing to the official of the second department, who certainly had a most business-like appearance and glared like a bull at Kalinovich.

The senior secretary turned out to be the red-haired Mediokritsky. His lucky star had risen together with that of the Gubernatorial Office manager to whom he was related, both having married sisters, the daughters of the priest Kiprensky. When he learned who the new Vice-Governor was, Mediokritsky's heart had fainted within him, but he told nobody and, hoping to make himself unrecog-

nizable, began to grow huge whiskers, and the Vice-Governor really did seem not to know him. In flattering the officials, the Governor had been chiefly moved by a desire to reward them for having handed over the former Vice-Governor to him, body and soul.

From the Court House he led the Vice-Governor through the departments.

"Gentlemen, here is your new and nearest chief, beneath whose direct observation will come your behaviour and your zeal for the service," he said in every department in ringing tones, and at last released Kalinovich, saying he would not venture to keep him any longer.

But things did not stop at this. The Governor returned Kalinovich's visit the same day, and insisted on being introduced to the lady of the house, so that Paulina, in a travelling robe, was forced to receive him in the still unfurnished drawing-room, littered with packing-cases, hat-boxes and miscellaneous objects. During this visit it came to light that the Governor had known Paulina's late father, had actually served under him for a short time, and considered him a splendid man. The Vice-Governor's lady was not to be outdone in this sort of civility, and, tired as she was after her journey, she nevertheless in a day or two called on the Governor's lady, who kept her at least two hours, plied her with coffee, and implored her, for God's sake, to be careful what acquaintances she made, even supplying her with a short list of ladies whom she might form intimacies with. Not content with this, the Governor's wife, forgetting her pride for once, returned Paulina's visit the very next day, drank coffee with her and stayed three hours, after which she announced everywhere that the new Vice-Governor's wife, while very plain, was a most charming woman. Of Kalinovich, too, both men and women said that though not at all handsome, he looked extremely intelligent.

III

The friendly relations developing between the head of the gubernia and the Vice Governor were a delight to society, and augured a brilliant winter season. In the first place Count Ivan had come and was of course setting his house in order. Another house was opened by his son-in-law, the fat Chetverikov. He had now been married five years to the charming young Countess, who had developed into an admirable married woman. A third and splendid house was that of the Marshal, who had at last obtained the Order of Anna to hang round his neck. No need to mention the President of the Exchequer Department—both he and his subordinate, the official of the department, had always kept open house. The manager of the Chamber of State Property, despite his stinginess, was this winter obliged to open the doors of his house two or three times during the season in order, on the one hand, to silence unpleasant rumours going the rounds about him in society with regard to the recruiting, and on the other, to entertain the court-adjutant. As for the Governor, there were to be three grandiose balls as well as his ordinary Thursdays. In addition to this, he promised to exert all his energies to get an entrepreneur from Kaluga to bring a splendid theatrical company. At least one ball was expected of the Vice-Governor, although he had so far shown no particular inclinations for society. In a word, everything was for the best, and things had begun to take their natural course. The Count, on the strength of his connection with the Vice-Governor, made strenuous attempts to get him on intimate terms with the Governor, and went round saying that Kalinovich was enthusiastic over the management of the head office and gubernia itself. This was almost believed in society. But those who were in the know, such as the Councillor of the Gubernatorial Office and the public prosecutor, could see very

well that it was not quite true. In any case it was obvious that the Vice-Governor intended to act perfectly independently. Matters began with that usher in the Gubernatorial Office who, as we know, died of his zeal for the service. The Governor, owing to a certain amount of outside pressure, proposed his own assistant for the vacancy, and sent in this proposal to the Board. But the Vice-Governor went to him and explained that he desired to put his own subordinate in the post—our old friend, the hunter Lebedev, whom Kalinovich had already summoned.

"Why should we take a man from another department, when we have plenty of our own?" asked the Governor, naturally enough.

"I know this man, Your Excellency, and am at least certain that he will steal neither state candles nor office stationery."

The Governor smiled and, not wishing to quarrel over such trifles, gave in. The second time the storm broke over Mediokritsky. After making the tour of the Court House the Vice-Governor went to the Governor with his report, in which he pointed out that the greatest and obviously intentional disorder had been found in the papers of the senior secretary, proving that Mr. Mediokritsky, even before this, as the Vice-Governor knew personally, had been involved in the theft of a thousand rubles from a private individual and that he had shown no moral improvement to this day, for which reason the Vice-Governor considered that the good of the service demanded his immediate dismissal without the right of appeal. Anyone knowing the relations existing between public officials will of course realize that the advancing of such a proposal without consulting the head of the gubernia was an act of defiance, showing an obvious desire to create unpleasantness for the office manager, who, as everyone knew, was the right hand and *alter ego* of the Governor. The old man delayed his decision for three whole days, when he received

from his Vice-Governor another semi-official letter stating that if His Excellency did not choose to dismiss Secretary Mediokritsky he would find himself obliged to ask the Ministry to appoint him to some other gubernia. A situation was thus created in which the Governor, so as to provide the unfortunate victim with a crust of bread, was practically compelled to find him a place as prison inspector, a fatal drop after the honourable position of senior secretary. And an unpleasant conflict arose in the filling of this vacancy: The Governor wished to put one of the officials from his own office in the post, to wit, an assistant of his office manager, a man absolutely loyal and devoted to himself. But the Vice-Governor declared that he had someone in mind for this post—none other than our old friend Ekzarkhatov. After instituting preliminary inquiries about his drinking habits, and discovering that Ekzarkhatov, having lost his wife, had not touched drink for the last seven years, Kalinovich wrote to him personally, offering him the place of senior secretary. Ekzarkhatov, who had not forgotten his former chief, at first refused, but the Vice-Governor wrote again, apologizing for his former behaviour to him, which, he said, had arisen in the first place from his own impulsiveness, and in the second place from Ekzarkhatov's unfortunate weakness. "But since," he added, "we have both grown older and conquered our weaknesses, we shall probably now get on well and I would ask you in all friendliness to share with me the weight of our duty to the service, to help me put into practice those honourable and noble convictions which inspired us in our youth, within the sacred walls of the university."

The soft-hearted Ekzarkhatov could not withstand such a proposal, and appeared in person to his new protector. At the first meeting there was something strange in the sight of these two old comrades. One, little lower than a general, sat in his comfortable study, with its satins and

carpets, attired in a velvet dressing-gown. The other stood before him respectfully in his shabby uniform, clumsy calfskin boots, with the usual mournful expression on his face, and the traces of grave, kindly thoughts still perceptible on his fine features. Kalinovich received him most graciously, and in the space of two days Ekzarkhalov was appointed. The only sign of displeasure that the Governor allowed himself was a certain dryness of manner, and he never missed an opportunity of finding fault with the work of the newly-appointed official.

"With regard to the Gubernatorial Board," he said frankly in society, "I have quite made up my mind to leave everything to my Vice-Governor, who is the actual chief there. That's his place, and mine is the gubernia 'itself.'" It appeared, however, that the Vice-Governor had begun to interfere in the affairs of the gubernia, too. I will select one from various instances, since it involved persons with whom we are more or less familiar. Everyone knows that the post of superintendent of police is not worth a fig nowadays: some three or four hundred rubles from the vodka licence dealer, an allowance for horses, and every now and then some meagre pickings arising from investigations. And at the same time the office manager's palm must be greased and something given to someone in the Gubernatorial Office, to keep them quiet. What is left over is trifling. But this cannot be said of the post of the extremely obliging police superintendent in our familiar N. district. Even landed proprietors with three hundred souls would say, before the voting began: "If I were made police superintendent in N., I wouldn't change places with the King of England." And all because of the timber rafts. Up to three thousand barges floated down the river every spring and it was by now an immemorial custom for a shipowner to pay a gold coin for every barge dispatched, and this added up to some fifteen thousand rubles. It was the superintendent's wife

who had, simply by her own endeavours and energy, obtained and consolidated this post for her husband. Judge, therefore, of the feelings of this lady on learning that a new Vice-Governor had been appointed—and who do you think: that duck of a Kalinovich! I am ready to swear that at these moments she forgot all the gossip she had spread about him and Nastenka. With a beating heart, in a state bordering on hysteria, she declared to all and sundry, flinging out her hands: “I saw him almost every day for three years, and even then there was something special, something Petersburgish, you know, in his face. And that sweet wife of his! For goodness’ sake! Why, I was on more than friendly terms in that house . . . much more! Everyone knew about their love. And then there was some other woman in love with him. He would go from one to the other, and I can’t tell you how touching it all was. He will, he must take my Semyon Nikitich under his protection.” With these words the superintendent’s lady fell into such paeans of praise that joyful tears streamed down her plump cheeks. But all this was no help, and her prophecies were not fulfilled. At the beginning of Lent, just when the issue of permits should have begun, the Vice-Governor all of a sudden reported to the Governor that, since the Zemstvo police in the town of N. had long been collecting illegitimate dues in their own favour from the shipowners, it would be necessary, in order to put an end to this, to dismiss the present police superintendent from his post, as one already in the habit of the said abuse of privilege. Should His Excellency consider this unsupported accusation inadequate, the details would have to be elicited by formal investigation, and all persons, both those directly incriminated, and those who had tolerated illegal acts, would be treated according to the law. The Governor, receiving this report, could only shrug his shoulders. What was to be done? If investigations were instituted, those idiots of peasants would no doubt

chatter about all the complaints they had sent in to him, complaints which had never gone any further. On the other hand, was he to accept the unsupported accusations of his Vice-Governor, and sacrifice without investigation a subordinate who had merely been zealously fulfilling his immediate and auxiliary duties? The old man actually fell ill while thinking over with his manager what it would be best to do. Since charity begins at home it was decided, while keeping the affair secret, to degrade the superintendent to the ranks, on the basis of alleged private information. The author himself saw the superintendent's wife after this unfortunate incident, as she was driving furiously into the district town, and it was not tears, but stones, millstones, that she shed. She did not complain so much of Kalinovich. He had done it out of hatred for her, "because, owing to her idiotic high-mindedness she had been unable to hold her tongue about his connection with that revolting Godneva girl. What angered her most was the Governor, that old dotard whom she had herself paid every year with her own hands—wasn't he ashamed to betray them?

Thanks to this chatter she got herself sent out of the town by the police, under secret orders from the head of the gubernia, for the Governor evidently did not yet wish to publish abroad his dissatisfaction with the Vice-Governor, and went about saying that he was precisely the assistant he had desired, that he had helped him to expose abuses which had been concealed from him personally. A new prank of the Vice-Governor, however, made it impossible for the Governor to maintain these tactics. An order for re-examination into the mental condition of the landowner Yazvin, now confined to a lunatic asylum on the representations of his heirs, was sent to the Gubernatorial Board. Almost the whole gubernia knew that the Governor, owing to his connections with the relatives putting in claims, took the liveliest interest in this matter,

and actually intended to be present at the examination himself. The only others present besides the Governor and the Vice-Governor were the doctors—the wry-necked inspector, wearing a cross on his breast, and the long-legged surgeon who was of German extraction, and had a fierce glare in his eyes. These two, ever faithful and in every way slaves to the Governor, entered the Court House shoulder to shoulder, bowed respectfully, and took their seats. After them came the prosecutor, a man still young, who danced the polka-mazurka at all the Governor's balls as long as he could stand on his feet. The heads of departments and the Marshal stayed away out of respect for the Governor, declaring once for all that whatever the Governor signed they too would put their names to. In a word, all was as it should be. At twelve o'clock the madman was brought in. He was a young man with a low forehead and a perfectly flat skull, hollow-chested with a pendulous abdomen, clad in a flannel robe over thick, patched underclothes, his feet in rusty-black slippers. A corporal, amazingly tall, with fiendish features, who looked as if he were capable of subduing not merely one madman, but a hundred devils, held him by the arm. They were humbly accompanied by our old acquaintance Prokhorov, one of the relatives laying claims, this time, not yelling as once at the Zemstvo court, but standing meekly in the doorway, his cap under his arm. The Governor nodded to him to sit down, and Prokhorov sat apologetically on the very edge of a distant chair.

"This gentleman has been in trouble here before already," said the Governor to Kalinovich, seated on his right side. "But the Senate demands a re-examination."

"I know. I have studied the case," replied Kalinovich.

The wry-necked inspector began asking the madman his name, religion and calling. He hesitated, as if not understanding what it all meant, but answered perfectly correctly.

"Tell me, my good man," said the Governor, suddenly

addressing him, "what do you think—does the earth go round, or the sun?"

"What did you say? I don't know what goes round, Your Excellency," he replied.

"Why, one of them goes round, the earth or the sun— which of them, then?" repeated the Governor.

"What goes round? What's that you say, Your Excellency?" replied the madman, backing away timidly.

"Doesn't understand," declared the Governor, shrugging his shoulders.

"His eyes show a lack of mental powers," corroborated the surgeon.

"And tell me, why is the moon like an iron spoon?" said the assessor wittily, anxious to continue the interrogation in the tone of the Governor.

The madman only stared; the Governor and all the other members of the commission smiled. Prokhorov, unable to control his delight, burst into a roar of laughter.

"That's not the way to put questions," interposed Kalinovich, rising to his feet. He had said nothing all the time, but now he addressed the sick man: "Come here, come to me, dear boy."

The latter approached him timidly.

"Don't be afraid. Why are you trembling so?" said the Vice-Governor, taking him kindly by the hand.

"That one keeps bullying me, Your Honour," replied the madman, pointing to the corporal.

"Why does he do that? He won't dare to any more. We'll punish him," said Kalinovich.

"I wouldn't bully him, Your Honour, but he makes such a noise," put in the soldier, his face reddening.

"Silence!" cried the Vice-Governor sternly. The corporal retreated a step. Kalinovich again turned to the madman. "Sit down here, dear boy, and we'll have a talk," he said.

"Oh, no, Your Honour! I can stand, I'm not tired, really I'm not," said the madman, speaking much more freely than before.

"But why do you keep wriggling? Are your clothes uncomfortable?"

"Of course they are, Your Honour. They took all my clothes away and gave me this robe. They're all drunkards, Your Honour. They sell everything for drink. And I had very nice clothes."

"How many souls have you?" asked Kalinovich.

"I have two hundred souls, Your Honour," replied Yazvin. "My own Papa left them to me, he did really."

"Well, and how are your crops? Any good?"

"How can the corn grow well, Your Honour," said the madman, speaking quite naturally, "it's all the doings of that Uncle Mikhailo Ilyich—there he is, over there, and he said to me: 'What d'you need horses for, you fool? They'll only kill you.' And he drove the whole herd over to his own fields. And what can you do in the country without horses, Your Honour, I ask you? A horse works for you and yields dung. The peasants said to me afterwards: 'Why did you give away your horses, master? Where there's no livestock there won't be any crops.' But what could I do? They're such dare-devils. They don't fear God!"

Prokhorov could no longer restrain himself.

"If you weren't a madman you'd never say that, and you'll be punished for it, you blockhead!" he said. But this time the madman too got angry.

"Who are you swearing at?" he said violently. "Why should I be punished for telling the truth? You think I'm afraid of you? Not I! What did you do to our girl? He got our girl with child, Your Honour. He's a bad fellow—with his moustache and his wiles."

The Governor lost his temper.

"Silence! Stop your nonsense!" he shouted.

The madman was intimidated. The tall corporal took two steps in his direction.

"Can you count, dear boy?" interrupted Kalinovich hastily. "Here you are, count this money. How much is there?" he added, handing him a heavy pocket-book.

"Is all that money yours, Your Honour? How rich you are."

"Yes, I'm rich. Count it."

The madman scratched his head, but calculated perfectly correctly.

"Two thousand and fifty rubles, Your Honour, and a five-ruble bill," he said, pushing the money away from him and then, plucking at Kalinovich's sleeve, still with a foolish smile on his face, he said: "Give me that five-ruble bill, Your Honour."

"Haven't you any money of your own?" asked Kalinovich.

"No, Your Honour, not a kopek, really I haven't. One of our peasants brought me three rubles, but the inspector saw it and took it away. 'You'll buy a knife with it, and cut your throat.' Why should I cut my throat? Am I such a fool? And what do they keep me in the madhouse for, tell me that?"

With these words Yazvin paused for a moment, and then went on again:

"Tell them to let me out, Your Honour, be so kind! I'm afraid, I am! A madman there, a very bad man he is, caught a madwoman and banged her about so in the porch she nearly died. Next thing they'll be killing me. And if you try and complain to our chief, Your Honour, all he says is: 'Go on, complain, we'll flog you.' As God is my witness, they do! Be so kind, master, tell them to let me out. I will bow down before you!" And the madman really did bow down before Kalinovich.

"Have you any relatives who would take charge of you?" asked Kalinovich, raising him.

"Why, yes, Your Honour, I have a cousin, a very poor woman. She went to complain five times, she did really. 'Why have you shut my cousin up?' she asked. 'I will look after him.' And all they did was drive her away. 'Get out!' they say."

"Do you know what you are saying, and before whom you are talking?" put in Prokhorov, pointing to the Governor.

"Ah, take him away! It's enough," said the Governor imperatively.

The corporal seized the sick man's left elbow in a grip of iron, turned him right about face and led him away.

"At any rate," continued the Governor, "I remain of my previous opinion, that he is not in possession of his senses. What do you say?" he added, turning to the doctors.

"Not in possession of his senses," confirmed the inspector.

"As if he could be in possession of his senses! Talking like that in front of the Governor," said Prokhorov, addressing all present.

All the members agreed with this.

"I must admit, Your Excellency, it appears that my opinion is exactly the opposite," countered Kalinovich. "I consider that this young man is perfectly sane."

"Sane? What's that you say?" cried the Governor, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Perfectly sane," repeated Kalinovich in the same tone. "And I therefore consider that it is a crime and against the law to keep him in the asylum. It is barbarous!"

"But according to the law born imbeciles are classified as insane," put in the prosecutor.

But the Vice-Governor, taking no notice of his words, continued:

"As for the way in which he managed his estate, this

must be investigated and, after the noblemen's assembly has drawn its conclusions, the case must be handed over for the Senate. But since it is clear from what he says that all his horses were taken away from him and, moreover, since there are complaints from the peasantry of violent and destructive activities by the heirs, the case calls for a special investigation, and those found guilty will be held strictly responsible for their endeavours to make a feeble-witted person to be insane in order to have him confined in a lunatic asylum, at the same time robbing and laying waste his fortune. This behaviour is to my mind equivalent to theft, wholesale robbery and an attempt on the life of another."

Such a stern official speech from Kalinovich stunned the whole company. Prokhorov turned pale. The members did not know where to look. The Governor was the first to recover his presence of mind.

"That's all very well. But you will agree that your views are extremely novel. They do not arise from the case."

"My views, Your Excellency, are, I consider, the only possible ones that could arise from the case," rejoined Kalinovich, with equal courtesy.

"That's what you say, but we think ours are. What do you say, gentlemen?" said the Governor, turning to the members with almost uncontrollable rage in his voice.

These bowed their heads in agreement.

"So that's what we must write," continued the Governor, twirling the ends of his moustache. "Write down," he said sternly to Secretary Ekzarkhatov, "that all the gentlemen present remain of their former opinion, excepting the Vice-Governor who has his own opinion to present. And kindly do not delay," he added, turning to Kalinovich, as if wishing to impose a duty upon him.

"I will present my opinion tomorrow," he replied in a tone of the utmost indifference.

The Governor rose, drawing himself to his full height. "Good-bye," he said, bowing cordially to all. "Good-bye, Yakov Vasilich, it's a pity there should be differences between us," he added to Kalinovich in a tone half-jesting, half-reproachful, and strode proudly out of the office.

Prokhorov followed him. The Governor, after speaking to him on the stairs a few minutes, got into his carriage. He was very pale and bit the ends of his moustache all the way home. The moment after his arrival at his own house a gendarme galloped headlong for the office manager. The other members of the Board, left to themselves, did not exchange a word, but bent over their work. On each face was written: there is trouble in the offing. Only the Vice-Governor remained perfectly calm, and there was even a mocking smile on his lips.

IV

For a whole week nothing was talked about in the town but the latest conflict between the two mighty ones. Society, unhesitatingly blaming the Vice-Governor, grouped itself still more closely and devotedly around the Governor, and only the Count capered madly like an imp impaled on a pitchfork. While buttering up the old man both to his face and behind his back he nevertheless declared that it was all just obstinacy on the part of the Vice-Governor—he must have a bee in his bonnet, but he meant no harm, no malice prepense in it. Hoping to smooth the matter over, the Count persuaded his daughter to give a party. It was said of him that he could not afford to give a party in his own house—his sugar-refinery had failed long ago. Rumour had it that his son-in-law would not give him a farthing; his estate was mortgaged, and had come on the market, and on moving to town he had pawned all his silver. There was a bewildered look about him nowadays—gone was his marvellous eloquence, his

subtle ingenuity of manner. Nevertheless, he planned the party with the utmost strategy. Only the most intimate and useful people were to be invited: the Governor and his lady and adjutant, the Vice-Governor and his wife, the President of the Exchequer and his family, the prosecutor with his two youthful assistants, who spoke beautiful French, and, finally, the engineer-cornet, for if people seemed very bored, he could be made to play the piano. That was all.

On the night of the party, the Governor having been there about an hour and the small company of guests all gathered, there was still no sign of Kalinovich. Anxiety began to show itself on the Count's face.

"Did you go yourself?" he whispered to his son-in-law, who sat beside him, breathing heavily.

"Yes, he promised he'd come," replied the latter.

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"Strange!" he said. But just then the bell rang, and in came the Vice-Governor. He bowed first to the Governor and his lady.

"Good evening, Yakov Vasilich, we haven't met for a long time," said the old man, holding out his hand without rising from his chair, and conquering his feelings so well that it would have been impossible to detect the slightest trace of resentment in his words.

"We haven't, Your Excellency," replied Kalinovich indifferently.

"And where's Paulina?" asked the hostess, who was pouring out tea at a great round table.

"She is not quite well," replied the guest.

At this the Count exchanged glances with his daughter. The Governor's wife glanced at the engineer-cornet who had only that morning told her, as a remarkable fact, that the Vice-Governor's wife, who had been everywhere, had not yet been to see the Countess or her daughter. Whether it was that her husband did not allow her to, or

that she herself did not wish to, nobody knew. The chairs had been so arranged that the Vice-Governor would find himself next to the Governor. But the former, turning lightly on his heel, went up and seated himself next to the hostess, in a chair which had been specially placed for the Governor's wife, who had not had time to sit in it.

"I'm going to sit nearer the tea, do you mind?" asked Kalinovich of Madame Chetverikova, who, all dressed up in *glacé* silk, was radiant with beauty. She merely turned her beautiful brown eyes on him, saying: "Do!" and busied herself to get him some tea.

"Don't put so much sugar in it!" said Kalinovich. "It'll be much too sweet."

"Oh, yes, I have given you a lot," she said, looking embarrassed. "I simply don't know how to pour out this wretched tea."

"Then what do you know how to do?" asked Kalinovich.

"Nothing," replied Madame Chetverikova in slightly injured tones.

"Too bad," said Kalinovich and they gazed at one another for several moments almost passionately.

"Tell me," began his hostess, bending low towards him, "aren't you friends with that gentleman?" And she nodded in the direction of the Governor.

"Why do you ask? I don't know his opinion of me, but I am very pleased with him," replied Kalinovich ironically.

"Come now, you're joking. What have you quarrelled about? He's so nice," admonished the hostess.

"Yes, he's ever so nice. Only he takes bribes."

"Why do you say that? It's nonsense," she replied.

"Why do you make me talk nonsense, when all I can want is look at your hands moving, hands which Aphrodite herself would envy."

"*Merci* for the compliment."

"I have no idea of paying you compliments," said Kalinovich. "And do you know," he went on, with a note of greater sincerity in his voice, "that there was a time when a certain young man for a single kindly smile, for a single glance from you would have been ready to sacrifice his life, his future—everything?"

"I know that," she answered, looking down coquettishly. "Oh yes," she added, "and did you ever write that book you told me about then?"

"No. I just made it up to foretell the future which you now enjoy."

"You're a fine person!" she said reproachfully.

"No better than you. It's six of one and half a dozen of the other," retorted Kalinovich, and it was clear to all that, instead of having a reconciliation with the Governor as expected of him, he intended to flirt with his hostess the whole evening. But he received a note from home the perusal of which brought a smile of obvious satisfaction to his face.

"*Adieu*," he said, picking up his hat discreetly and pressing his hostess's hand under the table.

"Where are you going?" she asked in a tone of astonished displeasure.

"Very sorry! Don't let me disturb anyone. *Adieu*," said Kalinovich and went away.

The Count ran after him but could not catch him up.

The Governor pretended only to have noticed Kalinovich's absence half an hour later.

"And where is our Vice-Governor?" he said in an indifferant voice.

"I don't know. He ran away. He received a note from home and ran away," said the Count.

The Governor said nothing, but fell to examining the lamp-shade, as if he admired it. Soon after, the chief of police came in. Spurs and sword rattling, he went straight up to the Governor and said, saluting:

"An official from the Ministry of the Interior, Court Councillor Kuropilov, has just arrived, Your Excellency."

The Governor rose, turning pale.

"What for?" he asked.

"As far as I could understand from the conversation he had with the Vice-Governor, who has just gone to him, it's about the Yazvin affair," the chief of police informed him.

"Ah, very good. Why are you staring at me, as if you'd never seen me before?" the Governor exclaimed furiously.

The chief of police reddened, but quickly recovered himself:

"Any orders, Your Excellency?" he asked, again saluting.

"None at all.... What orders could there be?... You can go... thanks for the trouble you have taken... none at all," repeated the old man irritably, and the chief of police went away.

"Fool!" called the Governor after him. "Some official arrives from Petersburg, and he loses his head, comes rushing up... blockhead!" he concluded, as if half in jest, but he was unable to conceal his anxiety and soon left, without waiting for supper.

The next day there was a rumour that Court Councillor Kuropilov had not even visited the Governor, and, seeing no one but the Vice-Governor, had galloped off to Yazvin's estate, where, it was said, he was investigating the case thoroughly. People close to the Governor declared that the old man would have to go to Petersburg himself, tidings which set many tongues wagging. At the very next meeting of their club the gentry decided to give him a dinner.

"A dinner, gentlemen, to put that milksop in his place!" cried some.

"A dinner!" was the unanimous response.

But here the question arose—should the Vice-Governor be put on the list of guests or not? The more simple-

minded, who were also a little drunk, shouted: "No, no! To hell with him!" But the more thoughtful were perplexed. Fortunately the Count arrived in the nick of time, and made up their minds for them.

"What right have we to expel him from our society? He's a courteous, correct man, a gentleman . . . and, finally, a local proprietor. If he wants to subscribe, well and good. If not, it's his own business."

"His own business!" confirmed the more thoughtful ones.

The President of the Exchequer, as the *doyen*, was to invite Kalinovich to subscribe. He went to call on him for that purpose on the next holiday.

"A dinner is being got up for the old man, our Governor, do you wish to take part in it?" he asked in somewhat wavering tones.

"Ah! A dinner, and a very good dinner, I'm sure. I like good dinners. Delighted!" replied Kalinovich, and signed his name without further ado.

His response was no doubt intended to pave the way for his subsequent sarcastic message to the *doyen*, in which he expressed his sincere regret that a slight indisposition prevented him from sharing with his colleagues the pleasure of eating sterlet and walnut-fed turkey. This was understood as indicating that he only regretted missing the dinner, and not the fact that he could not be present at the farewell party in honour of the head of the gubernia. This sally raised the love and respect felt for the Governor to still greater heights. Expressions of sympathy for him began immediately after the wine went round. The Councillor of the Control Department, never able at a single official banquet to realize that there is always plenty of wine on such occasions, usually got drunk over the *hors d'oeuvre*. After he had been in the appropriate condition for some time, he suddenly rose to his feet and shuffled up to the Governor's chair.

"I'm drunk, Your Excellency, excuse me," he muttered. "When the Minister asked you what sort of a controller you had, what did you write? I know what you wrote, and it's like this: while you live, I live, when you die, I die. I'm drunk, excuse me, but let me kiss your hand, excuse me!"

"Never mind, never mind!" said the Governor, refusing the hand which the Councillor was endeavouring to catch.

The President of the Exchequer, who was by now on his feet, put an end to this scene. He nodded to the official who was looking after the dinner, and the latter led the controller back to his chair, there to wallow in his ecstasy and splutter out his gratitude, while the president prepared to deliver a speech that should be both brief and correct. It is necessary before going further to state that on the right hand of the Governor sat an old fellow, General von Weiden, a wretched, insignificant creature. It was his custom to cow provincial officials by boasting of his friendship with the Governor, before whom he grovelled shamelessly himself. Now he had come with grief in his heart to see off his friend and benefactor. On the Governor's left side sat a certain Kalamsky, the Marshal of the Nobility, who had risen no further in the army than sublieutenant and had therefore never hoped to be treated with humanity by a General, so that when, on becoming Marshal, he found himself treated with kindness by the Governor, he was imbued with fanatical love for him. Hearing of his intended departure, Kalamsky had galloped over four hundred miles in two days, in order to arrive in time for the dinner. Both these individuals served as excellent subject-matter for the orator.

"Neither the age of the one," he began, indicating the aged General, "nor the distance to be traversed by the other," he continued, pointing to the Marshal, "has prevented these gentlemen from expressing the feelings

cherished by us all. We rejoice in this moment in which you are with us, and regret that it cannot be prolonged for the whole of our lives, and we envy happy Petersburg which will receive you in its embraces."

"Hurrah!" cried the assembled company, raising their glasses.

The Governor, rising to his feet, was fairly melted.

"Gentlemen! To all this I can only reply with the sentiment so dear to us all: 'Hearken ye Nations, for the Lord is with us!'" he burst out, apropos of nothing whatever.

"The Lord is with us!" echoed the enthusiastic assembly.

The old man shed tears creating excitement which exceeds all powers of description. After dinner they tossed him in the air. Completely overcome, he called for champagne, insisted on everyone drinking with him. He flung fifty silver rubles to the musicians, who repeatedly played flourishes, and at last, from his seat in the carriage, demanded that everyone should come and kiss his cheek through the open window.

V.

Tell me when and where the crowd has not been false, treacherous, fickle? Hardly had the news come that things were not going well with the old Governor in Petersburg, and that Kalinovich, on the contrary, had been promoted Councillor of State, hardly, I say, had this spread abroad, when the Governor's wife was abandoned by almost everyone. She was forced to sit in solitary state in her palatial home, and public opinion was obviously inclining towards her enemies, beginning with Paulina, who was all of a sudden discovered to be an admirable woman, on the grounds that, with her fortune, and being still not an old woman, she never

dressed up, showed no desire to live in society, and devoted herself entirely to her family, though what she did in the way of family life was more than anyone could say. It was indeed hinted that she probably did not live in harmony with her husband, but people praised her just the same, simply because they had to have somebody to praise.

The attitude to Kalinovich also underwent a change. Everybody could now see that he was a man of character and, apparently, a figure of some weight in Petersburg. The first to change his opinion of him was the President of the Exchequer, formerly a general who had only removed his epaulettes a couple of years before, and still retained a most presentable appearance. This worthy sank so low as to approach the Councillor of State and ask his pardon for his participation in the dinner to the Governor, referring to the gentry, who had forced him to do so as their *doyen*. Secretary Ekzarkhatov, who witnessed this scene, for all his innate discretion could not resist telling them in the office how the president had pressed his hand against his heart, raised his eyes to heaven and declared, exactly like the mayor in Gogol's *Inspector-General*, that he had acted "from inexperience, nothing but inexperience," so that you could see it had made the Vice-Governor sick to hear him.

"What is troubling you, Your Excellency?" Kalinovich had said in vexation and contempt. "God knows it's all the same to me whether you went to the dinner or not." But these words could not penetrate the thick skull of the president, and he went on and on. "It's amazing how developed their capacity for kowtowing is," said Ekzarkhatov, describing the scene, and the whole office laughed.

The next person to rally to the banner of Kalinovich was the Count.

"It was wrong, wrong! The old chap shouldn't have argued and stood out! He should have given in."

Throughout my novel the reader has seen that I have nowhere flattered my hero, but have, on the contrary, endeavoured to throw as vivid a light as I could on his moral defects, but this time I cannot allow myself to pass over in silence the fact that, in the service chosen by him, he showed himself to be an extremely active and, indeed useful person. The Count, who was cleverer and more educated than the other members of local society, understood better than they which way the wind was blowing. Kalinovich was a worthy representative of those young administrators who were just beginning to break through the thick crust of chicanery. The youthful Vice-Governor, even in his university days, had always been in favour of the impartial administration of state affairs, and of opposing to the utmost all the pleadings of officials and private individuals. He now started to apply these same principles to the matters of the Gubernatorial Board. A beginning was made with the municipal chiefs, all of whom were fond of trading and lining their own pockets, and equally averse to the idea of serving society. The Vice-Governor summoned them into his presence and informed them that unless they busied themselves over public affairs, and increased the municipal funds, he would not stop to administer reproofs, but would immediately close down their shops, factories and offices, and would not allow them either to buy or sell a farthing's worth for a whole year. Nor must they think to excuse themselves by pleading simplicity or ignorance, for they were clever enough swindlers, all of them, to understand everything. The chiefs emerged from his presence in a state of collapse, and galloped post-haste to their own little towns, and engaged clerks at their own expense to dig up quitrent items of which no one had ever dreamed before.

Dealers in vodka licences fared no better. Unhampered by his personal acquaintance with the fat Chetverikov

or by the fact that he was distantly related to him, Kalinovich summoned him and explained that, since he was doing splendidly in business, perhaps he would not object to pay to society some portion of the millions he had amassed at its expense by contributing ten thousand rubles or so to the beautification of the town. The feelings of the stingy and avaricious Chetverikov when he heard these words may be imagined.

"There is no provision for unforeseen expenses under the licences, Yakov Vasilich," he said, blushing.

Kalinovich was furious.

"I don't care a jot, Sir, if you have such a sum or not!" he shouted. "You ought to be ashamed to say such things. I am sure the whole gubernia knows that your coffers are bursting with the poor peasants' and impoverished officials' last farthings wrung from them by you. You might at least, for very shame, restore four per cent of what you have stolen from society. I swear to you by the Holy Cross," continued the Vice-Governor, finally losing his temper, and pointing to the icon, "unless you give me—and now, owing to your obstinacy, I will name not ten, but fifteen thousand—I will have all the taverns throughout the gubernia shut during mass every Sunday and saint's day, and at the slightest hint of thieving or debauchery on the part of your innkeepers I'll lock them up in gaol for years on end."

The intimidated fat man could only throw up his hands.

"And don't think you can get rid of me as you did of the former Vice-Governor," continued Kalinovich, tapping the table with his finger. "They know me over there, and they won't deliver me up to you. Moreover, I mean to stay on here simply to prevent you from complaining. Now do you understand the extent of my moral detestation of your tricks?" he concluded, smiting his chest.

The fat man quite lost his head.

"Mais, mon cher, je vous prie, ne vous emportez pas,"

he muttered. "I can let you have the money today if you like."

"Kindly do so, and tomorrow the amount of your contribution will be in the papers and communicated to the Ministry," replied Kalinovich. "You need not trouble to conceal the fact that I forced you to do so under duress, since in my opinion it will give me more credit and you less," he added ironically, showing Chetverikov to the door.

"Of course, of course! But why say that?" replied the latter, trying to force a smile. But when he was in his carriage a look of extraordinary grief stole over his features.

"The old devil had his for a year in advance," he whispered through his thick, drooping lips, "and now this one demands another fifteen thousand, damn him!"

In the meanwhile a gendarme was sent from the head of the gubernia for the commander of the penal battalion, and in less than half an hour Captain Timkov, who had started in the service as a private soldier, stood at attention in the ante-room, in full uniform. Despite his extraordinary self-control and a face as rigid as if upholstered in raw hide and not covered by living skin, he was deathly pale, having no idea what he had been summoned for, and the young official, brought by the Vice-Governor from Petersburg and now a permanent member of the office staff, went up to him, yawning, and asked mockingly:

"What's the matter with you? Are you ill?"

"Not at all," replied the captain with trembling lips.

At last Kalinovich came out of his study and, though there were several other officials in the ante-room, went straight up to the captain.

"Listen to me," he said, "I intend to put an end to your swindling with the unfortunate prisoners, whom you use for your own advantage and send to work gratis for various gentlemen, and who, by the way, clean up your

mistress's yard and dung-heap, by ordering you not to send a single prisoner anywhere from this moment. They will work on the construction of the embankment. Every month I will inspect their pay-sheets myself, and as well as payment by the hour, another sum must be expended on the improvement of their food. And woe to you if the cabbage is sour or the beef bad! I will come myself and cram it all down your throat. You may go."

The captain uttered not a word, but departed, making a correct military left-about turn. Once on the porch steps, he shrugged his shoulders, cast a glance at the church, as if placing his hopes on that shrine, and returned to barracks.

Kalinovich's activities naturally astonished and alarmed respectable people. "He's mad! Only Vice-Governor and goes about upsetting and smashing everything, forsooth!" they said to one another on the quiet. The younger ones, among whom opponents of the old order of things are usually more likely to be found, were enraptured with him. Conspicuous among these was a chubby graduate of Derpt University, who was on the staff of the Governor's office, and had taken a vow to enter in his notebook at least ten villainies and a dozen follies, perpetrated there every day. The old Governor knew all this but was unable to dismiss him, for the graduate had come from Petersburg under police surveillance, and had been expressly appointed to the office. Another disaffected individual was a certain Monsieur Kozlenev, a very good-looking young fellow, the son of the Governor's sister. An extremely rich woman, she had implored her brother with tears to take this scapegrace on his staff, for it was impossible to leave him in Petersburg where he might at any moment be recruited into the army or exiled to the Caucasus. Such antecedents may give an idea of the pranks likely to be played in a gubernia town by such a young gentleman. For instance, on the day on

which the uncle gave a magnificent ball to the whole gubernia, the nephew gave one for serving maids: one day for brunettes, and another for blondes. Needless to say the wenches ran in on the sly from all over the town, and were treated so generously that many ladies returning from the Governor's ball found their maids dead drunk. Almost every day of public importance the young scamp and his menservants would seat themselves on the gateposts, tucking their feet beneath them, each with a huge ring between his teeth, wrinkling up their noses, and really looking very much like stone lions. These pranks, however, might be passed off as pardonable high spirits, but there was worse. For instance, his mother having extracted from him a promise to dine at the Général's every day, Kozlenev went about telling everyone that his aunt, the Governor's lady, deported herself like Potiphar's wife every day after dinner, in proof of which he carried about, and showed to all, two frock-coats, the skirts of which really were torn. A third rebel was a retired captain of the Uhlans, a most gallant young man, whose face was slightly reminiscent of an Italian bandit. His magnanimous feelings and ideas apparently inspired him with a burning thirst to knock out the teeth of anyone he considered a bad lot. The present object of his attentions was the manager of the Governor's office, whose ugly mug the young man had taken a vow to smash one day, adding that on no other terms could the unfortunate gentleman be allowed to continue his existence on God's earth.

One evening these young gentlemen gathered together in the club, conversing at a small table. The fat graduate related in detail how Kalinovich had that morning told the manager that he was slow-witted, stupid and base. The captain fell into ecstasies.

"Well done, the Vice-Governor!" he cried. "We must drink his health. Hi, you there, blockhead! Champagne!" he called out to the waiter.

The wine was brought. Just then a young official, one of Kalinovich's protégés, passed their table.

"Listen, old man!" called out the graduate. "We're going to drink the health of your Vice-Governor. Couldn't you ask him to come here? He's over there, playing cards. I think you might. He's a good chap."

"Certainly I can," replied the young official.

"Go and ask him."

"All right," and a moment later the young man came back with Kalinovich.

"Permit us to drink your health," began the captain, "and to wish you luck in stamping out the Governor's tribe, and as thoroughly as possible."

"And my request, Yakov Vasilich," put in Kozlenev, "is this: couldn't you get my uncle degraded from his General's rank and see to it that no one dares to call my auntie 'Your Excellency' any more? She will never get over it, and will melt away like wax before our eyes."

"Long live reason and truth!" said the graduate, pressing Kalinovich's hand in his own plump fist.

"I am very grateful to you, gentlemen, and your attention is the more agreeable to me in that it expresses the opinion of honourable and high-minded persons," replied Kalinovich, touching glasses with them.

"More champagne!" Kozlenev yelled, but the Vice-Governor, perhaps not wishing to be carried away by the moment of enthusiasm into still greater familiarities, hastened off, saying that his partners were waiting for him.

VI

In the meantime, the gubermia found itself faced with the necessity of passing a decision on an extremely serious question: in a day or two bargaining was to begin with respect to a thirty-mile road to be made across the

bog, for which an estimated two hundred thousand rubles had been provisionally assigned. Up till now no one had doubted for a moment that this would be put in the hands of Contractor Mikhailo Trofimich Papushkin, a merchant who was on an intimate footing in the Governor's house. How great the intimacy was may be judged from the fact that "Mishka Papushkin" (that very Mikhailo Trofimich, only ten years ago a humble timber merchant, whom we may remember, clad in a shabby quilted jacket, as having travelled to Moscow beside Kalinovich) was admitted to the boudoir of the Governor's lady while she was in her morning *deshabille* and not even receiving her lady friends—and all because he had once presented her with a silver tea-service. But what a majestic figure he has now become! Only see him driving along the main street of the town! The highly-varnished carriage on horizontal springs sinks beneath his weight. The silver-plated harness gleams; the swollen sides of the fattest stallion in the world gleam; the coachman's robe, belt and cap gleam; and last but not least, Mikhailo Trofimich himself, in a frock-coat of the finest cloth, gleams. He has put on ten stones, and, like a walrus, turns his snout lazily from side to side, bowing carelessly, when passing workmen or mere clerks bow to him from the waist. He is said to have shown himself a regular brute, still afraid of evil spirits and highway robbers, but of nothing else. The gubernia architect encountered him in the road and waved his hand as their carriages drew abreast of one another. The contractor responded with a smile.

"Wait a minute, Mikhailo Trofimich, wait a minute!" shouted the architect.

"We can wait, since you wish it," replied the contractor. "Stop, can't you, you fool!" he shouted to his coachman, who instantly reined in the horse.

The architect sprang out of his own conveyance and strutted up to the contractor's carriage.

"Here we are again!" he said. "Do you intend to take on the Manokhinsky Road?"

The contractor frowned.

"Ai, ai, old man, your words are a dagger in my heart," cried the contractor frowning, but after a pause continued: "Your Manokhinsky Road has turned out a worthless thing, I must tell you."

"Worthless, is it? What a fickle chap you are! I don't think our estimates will hurt you," said the architect, gazing into Mikhailo Trofimich's eyes in astonishment.

"It's not a matter of estimates, dear Sir, I haven't seen them, and don't intend to! I don't give a fig for them! They're nothing to me! I'm not new to this sort of thing—if I'm plucked, then you are plucked, too. But that's not the point just now! The point is that we contractors are fools. That's what matters."

"Fools? Is it Nikolashka Travin you're afraid of?"

"Nikolashka Travin! I'm not likely to be afraid of his ugly mug! Grigory Petrov, or Polosukhin, or Semyon Grebenka—I fear none of them. I know them—they're all right!"

"They're all right," confirmed the architect.

"They're all right," repeated the contractor. "People aren't going to begin getting in each other's way at this date. If he gives me the chance this time, and behaves well by me, I'll find plenty of ways for giving him a chance to make a little something for himself. If it weren't for the gentry trying to worm themselves into things. You have probably heard that the Count is poking his nose in."

"Who hasn't? An appeal has been sent in. But we don't take him seriously, he only wants to grab something—he's a braggart of a fellow!"

"You're clever ones, aren't you?" put in the contractor irritably. "I went to him myself and hinted at what you say, to try and get round him."

"Well, and what then?"

"What then? I went straight to him and said, 'Enough Your Honour, you're a clever gentleman, don't spoil things,' I said. 'Just quietly take what's due to you and be done with it. I'll let you have five thousand,' I said. But oh, Lord, there's no talking to him! 'My position is such, Mikhailo Trofimich,' he says, 'that fifteen thousand, let alone five thousand, wouldn't set me right again. And I will stick to this business to the last farthing,' he says. 'And the present Vice-Governor is my kinsman,' he says, 'and he is on my side.' "

"As to the Vice-Governor, he's simply lying, he's only trying to throw dust in your eyes. He's that sort," insisted the architect.

"I know that. I'm not a little child, you don't have to teach me," reported the contractor testily. "I wasn't born yesterday, thank God! I went to the Vice-Governor too."

"Well, that's a good thing!" interrupted the architect.

"You may well say so! I told him all about it," continued Mikhailo Trofimich. "And he gave me such a drubbing that I wouldn't go through it again for any money! He's an insulting fellow, that's what he is! That's how I understand him, anyhow! I tried to speak to him as if he were a man of sense. 'It's like this, Your Honour,' I said. 'I've been looking after these State contracts all these years, and I don't think the authorities have ever found cause to complain of me.' "

"That they haven't," confirmed the architect.

"That they haven't!" repeated Mikhailo Trofimich in infuriated tones. "And what do you think he said to this? 'That's not what I want to know,' says he. 'And where you got your millions from, I know very well,' says he. 'If I have any millions, Your Honour,' says I, 'they were earned by my own toiling and moiling.' 'All your toiling and moiling,' says he, 'only went on robbing the public

purse.' These are the words he used! I never heard the like, even from people higher up than him!"

Here the architect sighed and shook his head.

"Wait till I tell you the things he said to me after that, old man," continued Mikhailo Trofimich as furiously as before. "It's enough to make a cat laugh! 'And if you do get the job this time,' says he, 'mind you don't take a penny worth of commission on it, not to mention ten per cent!'"

Again the architect shook his head.

"Why is he so down on our commission?"

"I'm not talking about the commission, I'm talking about myself. The authorities are one thing and I'm another! Who is to lay down the law to me? It's my money. I can do what I like with it, can't I? I can eat it if I like, and that's all about it. It's no use talking!" Here Mikhailo Trofimich got really worked up and smote himself on the chest. "'And I won't give you a superintendent of works from any of the local gents,' says he. 'I'll get one from Petersburg. You won't be able to buy him off.' Did you ever hear such a thing? As if you and I, old man, didn't know those Petersburg gents! Sinner that I am, I told him straight out: 'Why not get hold of an Englishman. Your Honour?' says I. 'Their ways may be different from ours. For we know the Petersburg ones—they're worse grabbers than the ones here,' says I. 'Don't you worry about that!' says he. 'There won't be any of that with me here. Besides,' says he, 'I shall be the one to pass the work, and I shall drill a hole every few feet, so watch yourself!' says he. Look how deep he means to go into it!"

"What does he think he'll see in his holes?" asked the architect, smiling broadly.

"I don't know what he thinks he'll see, unless it's pure curiosity on his part," said Mikhailo Trofimich ironically. "Just an empty fellow, that's all I can call him," he con-

tinued, with ever-increasing vehemence. "If he's really such a good governor, and if it is his intention to look after the public purse instead of trying to avoid me, he should send for me, search for me with a candle by daylight, because, you know, there's no one who understands this business as well as I do. It's a big affair. That Count of his now says he'll shave the estimate to the last farthing. But that's only talk! All it means is that he'll grab what he can, whatever happens. We know these gentlemen contractors! We've seen plenty of them ruined! They'll never find anyone—I don't care who it is!—to do the job cheaper than me. They're not up to it. Why, there's over a thousand men in my debt right outside my gate. I began giving out advances in the spring—famine, you know, and the recruiting. And now nobody can touch me, I can find men for ten kopeks a day, while others can't find them for 75 kopeks. So the outlay here will be very heavy."

"Say what you will, Mikhailo Trofimich," remarked the architect, "but you ought to have told the Vice-Governor all this. He would have understood you."

"I'm not fool enough for that, old man," rejoined the contractor, his eyes bulging. "Just try speaking frankly to him, and you'll find yourself where no one has ever been before! That's what I take his sarcasm to mean. We've got to look after ourselves in our little way. We know what to say and whom to say it to. He won't get a word out of me with red-hot pincers. Let him do as he likes!"

"Surely you don't mean to stay out of the contracting?" asked the architect. "You *must* be angry!"

The contractor frowned again.

"I'll attend to the contracting all right, these affairs don't go on without me," he replied. "And now this excellency of theirs must either pay me smart money, or I'll get him into such a mess that he and his kinsman

won't be able to get out of it. They'll howl for mercy, they'll fall at my feet. I can tell you—they won't be the ones to pull down Mikhailo Trofimich—it'll be I who'll teach them a lesson."

"Teach them—do! Why not?" cried the architect and went back to his phaeton.

"I'll teach them!" echoed Mikhailo Trofimich, and he told his coachman to drive on.

"You teach them!" the architect called after him, approvingly.

"I'll teach them!" repeated Mikhailo Trofimich, and he drove off.

The day for the contracting, the 17th of September, came round at last. The members of the commission and those desirous of competing were already gathered at the office of the building commission. No one was more excited and upset than Nikolashka Travin, who had only just begun his career as a petty swindler. The muscles of his arms and legs twitched, indeed his whole body was in a state of agitation. Mikhailo Trofimich sat calmly in his arm-chair. Next to him sat Grebenka, a mere bag of bones, the so-called dissenting contractor, who made more by usury than by contracting. He, too, was quite calm. The wall-eyed Grigory Polosukhin was merely melancholy. Opposite them sat the Count, his face covered with crimson blotches, and his eyes as bleary as if he had not slept for several nights. Twelve o'clock struck and the Vice-Governor had still not arrived. This was considered a little strange for he was notorious for punctuality. The good-natured secretary at last came into the office and announced with a smiling face: "Coming!" All sat up straight and began setting their clothes in order. Kalinovich came in, pale as death. The hand which grasped his leather portfolio trembled perceptibly.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, for keeping you waiting," he began, taking his place at the head of the table. Then,

turning to the secretary, he said: "Give me the securities sent in for today's contract."

The secretary obeyed.

"Are they all here?" asked the Vice-Governor, fixing a penetrating glance on him.

The secretary turned pale.

"Yes, Your Excellency," he replied in faltering accents.

Kalinovich, shuffling the papers, stopped at one.

"As a matter of fact, all these have been investigated," he said, addressing the members of the commission. "But I must tell you that I have just received information in answer to my questions regarding the testimony of the Penza Civil Chamber that it never gave any testimony whatever in regard to this estate. In other words, the testimony is forged."

With these words the Vice-Governor drew the reply of the Civil Chamber out of his pocket and handed it to the staff officer. All faces lengthened. Mikhailo Trofimich even drew back. The blotches on the Count's face merged into a flood of crimson.

"The bargaining will therefore not take place today, gentlemen," Kalinovich told the merchants, placing the securities in his portfolio, which he immediately locked. "We must first look into the circumstances of the forgery," he told the members of the commission.

"Of course," they rejoined unanimously.

The Vice-Governor bowed hastily to them and, as if anxious to put an end to a scene so painful to himself, hurried out of the room. The Count plunged after him immediately. As they crossed to the door of the office, Kalinovich said something to him in a very low voice. The crimson face of the Count at once turned pale. Some clerks saw him go down the stairs almost staggering. He was awaited at the bottom by the chief of police, with whom he went away.

That same evening, terrible rumours spread through the town that Count Ivan had been detected in false testimony and had been thrown into prison by the Vice-Governor.

VII

The politics of my little world were shaken to their very foundations. The gentry were up in arms against Kalinovich. At parties, at balls and at the clubs people asked one another what right he had to imprison a gentleman, a Count, without trial and investigations. The Marshal, instigated by the Count's well-wishers, asked the Vice-Governor officially on what grounds the Count had been arrested without the knowledge of deputies from the gentry. To this he received the insolent reply that the question was not a legitimate one, and he therefore did not see fit to reply to it. The Marshal informed the Ministry of this. The youthful prosecutor, who had lately made up his mind to put an end to his dancing career and take to wife the daughter of the Marshal himself, also went to the Vice-Governor and asked on what grounds a Collegiate Councillor Count Ivan Ramensky was being held in prison, and what was the gravity of the accusations against him. But the prosecutor only received the laconic reply that the matter was one of false testimony and was urgently requested to see to it that all the measures provided by the law were taken to prevent any possibility of escape, evasions and abuse of the law on the part of a prisoner of such importance. The red-nosed chief of police himself started the investigations. Partly owing to his natural ferocity and partly from a desire to ingratiate himself with the Vice-Governor, it was said that he kept the Count on his feet two or three hours during interrogations. One of the Count's serving men was, for some unknown reason, also

flung into prison. Not only this, a parish clerk, who was also an engraver, was arrested in the town of N. and, finally, a runaway soldier was seized on his way to Moscow, a fellow who was said to be able to forge any handwriting.

The soft-hearted secretary of the building commission hanged himself from fright. People passing the police-station said they heard cries and moans coming from it, showing that the unfortunate prisoners were being all but tortured during interrogations. In a word, the most terrible rumours were spread far and wide! Men shook their heads and waited from hour to hour for the Vice-Governor to receive a blow from which he could never recover. The ladies, too, were in a state of frantic agitation. They visited one another incessantly, to give or receive the latest news. Of the Count they said that who knows? he may have been guilty and deserving of his fate, but you couldn't help pitying the family. It was appalling to think that the unfortunate Countess, that angelically kind woman, who had devoted her whole life to loving her husband, must now see him in such a state! People whispered that her habitual silence had deepened to the point of imbecility. The doctor positively feared for her reason. And to crown all, that fat Chetverikov had done a thing which showed up his tradesman's soul. Hardly had he learned of the misfortune overcoming his father-in-law, when he rushed off to Siberia, to evade any suspicion of having a part in the affair, abandoning his poor wife who, of course, had not wished to leave her father in such a situation. It is needless to say that Kalinovich was branded as a monster by the ladies.

"After all, he isn't bad-looking, you know. But there was always something inquisitorial in his face," they said, almost openly.

As if in harmony with the universal fears and the melancholy mood of society, autumn came in misty and damp. The evenings seemed endless. On one such eve-

ning a cold wind with a touch of frost blew in gusts along the streets. The lamps flickered dimly in the darkness. Not a soul on the pavements, not a carriage on the roads. . . . And everyone knew that in the midst of this silence terrible investigations were being held ceaselessly in a crypt, to which gendarmes conducted all sorts of persons connected with the case. At the present moment the Vice-Governor himself was attending the interrogation of the old postmaster of N., who had only a day or two ago been arrested and carried to the gubernia town. The clerks saw the old man silently writing down his replies, in big characters, but what he wrote no one knew.

In the house of the Vice-Governor, too, all was gloomy and empty. The only light in the front of the house was in the huge cloak-room, where the footman dozed away his time, and a certain gentleman in a torn overcoat had been waiting for half an hour. At the other side of the house light streamed to the pavement from a corner room, in which Paulina, who had of late quite stopped going out, now spent most of the day. Her husband's hostile act against her relative and the friend of the family could scarcely have pleased her. Just now, however, she was not alone. Madame Chetverikova was with her, and good heavens, how the two ladies had changed during these last few days! The Vice-Governor's wife was an old woman now, and her face, sickly enough when she was young, had now fallen in like that of a corpse. A few valuable rings jingled up and down her emaciated fingers. It was obvious that married life (God knows, never productive of much joy for her!) had now brought her low indeed. And Madame Chetverikova, lately as fresh and lovely as a blossom, did not look much better. The roses on her cheeks had given way to a pale, opaque hue. The lids of her beautiful eyes were swollen with crying, and not so much as a brooch or a coloured pin was to be seen on her dress. Instead of a gown of

gleaming coloured damask, she wore a simple robe of black silk. Her luxurious braids were held up carelessly with pins. How else was she, the daughter of a criminal, to dress? The impartiality of a chronicler compels me to state that a warm, tender woman's heart had suddenly shown itself in this society lady, who had hitherto never displayed the slightest human feeling. It was obvious that she was ready to do anything for her father, that he was her sole ideal, as a man, her love, her joy. . . . Like all practical persons the Count had known how to bring up his children to his own advantage.

The two ladies sat in silence for something like half an hour. There was such pain in the heart of each of them that they could hardly bear to speak, and merely exchanged fragmentary phrases.

"When did you see him?" asked Paulina.

"Yesterday. The inspector in the prison is kind. He lets me in," replied Madame Chetverikova, covering her face with her hands.

"Has he changed? Is he dejected?"

"Terribly! He says money is what he needs most of all now, and I haven't a penny. My husband went away and left me with almost nothing. Just fancy, *chère amie*, they don't give him tea—they say he might set fire to the prison."*

With these words Madame Chetverikova began to cry. Paulina's eyes, too, were full of tears.

"They say the only hope is to ask Yakov Vasilich. Can it be that he will show no mercy? Hasn't he a drop of pity in him?"

Paulina smiled bitterly.

"I don't think Yakov Vasilich has ever shown mercy to anyone when his vanity is involved. I ought to know him," she said.

* Tea implies a samovar and live coals.—Tr.

"No, *chère amie*, I will persuade him, I will go down on my knees to him, implore him. . . . I'm a woman. He will understand me. Let me ask him, let me go to him alone!"

"Very well," agreed Paulina. "But I warn you in advance that he's the most terrible man I've ever known," she added with a sort of nervous spasm.

After this the ladies fell silent and thoughtful, but soon an angry ring at the bell made them start.

"It is he," said Paulina.

"It's he," repeated Madame Chetverikova and they both turned pale.

It was indeed Kalinovich, who had returned home. On his entrance the footman leaped to his feet and stood at attention. The gentleman in the torn coat hastened up to him.

"A letter, Your Honour," he began.

"Can't you wait, blockhead—rushing up like that!" cried the Vice-Governor angrily.

The gentleman in the torn coat retreated to his former place. Kalinovich went straight into his study. The servant placed two lighted candles on the table. The Vice-Governor, nodding to him to go, sank into an arm-chair and plunged into profound thought. It was clear that his present post was not an easy one, especially of late. The grey hair at his temples had spread all over his head. There was something wild in his glance, and his hands hung helplessly at his sides. In a word, he presented a picture of a broken man. But the soft steps of Paulina were heard and Kalinovich's face immediately assumed a stern, cold expression.

"Madame Chetverikova has come, she wishes to see you," said Paulina.

"What does she want?" asked Kalinovich.

"I don't know. I suppose she wants to ask you about her father," replied Paulina.

The Vice-Governor reddened. It was the first time he had had occasion to see anyone from the Count's family since the latter's misfortune. For a few moments he perceptibly wavered. It would have been excessively harsh to refuse to see her, but on the other hand, he was ashamed to receive her, and did not trust his own firmness.

"Ask her to come in," he said at last.

Paulina went out with a feeling of relief. This reply gave her a gleam of hope. Madame Chetverikova entered and said: "*Bonsoir*." She was as slender and graceful as ever, but my hero received her with a cold, indifferent expression on his face.

"*Bonsoir*," he replied, pointing to a chair.

"I have come, Yakov Vasilich, to intervene for my father. Have mercy on him, for God's sake!" she began at once.

"What can I do, Katerina Ivanovna?" asked Kalinovich.

"Oh, heavens! They say you can do anything!" cried Madame Chetverikova, wringing her hands.

The Vice-Governor shrugged his shoulders.

"Look here, Kalinovich!" she said, offering him her exquisite hand. "I believe you liked me once. And even quite lately you were so courteous as to tell me that the only thing which gave you any pleasure and revived your former happiness was to see me. Oh, I will be grateful to you my whole life, I will love you as long as I live--only save my father, Kalinovich, save him!"

All the time she was speaking, Madame Chetverikova did not let go of Kalinovich's hand, and he did not withdraw it.

"I will not speak of the past," he said. "You may call me a tyrant, a miscreant. But now, now, what is there I can do? Tell me that!"

"Then listen!" said Madame Chetverikova. "They say my father has another mortgage on the estate of that old postmaster. Take it and say it was the one you meant,

and not the one he is being tried for. Say it was a mistake—it won't do you any harm!"

Kalinovich frowned and took away his hand.

"The postmaster acknowledges that he only issued it a day or two ago, and besides," he continued, putting his hand to his head, "you speak like a woman. It's impossible, not to mention the immorality of such an act."

"It is never immoral to save a man, Kalinovich," said Madame Chetverikova.

The Vice-Governor shrugged his shoulders.

"It would be no good!" he cried. "Believe me, the only difference would be that I should be put in prison as well as your father, and another official would come and do exactly what I have done."

"It would, it would, don't say that!" declared the young woman with heart-rending grief and despair. "I will go down on my knees to you, I will kiss your hands!" she said and actually fell at his feet.

"Great heavens! Katerina Ivanovna! What are you doing?" he cried, trying to raise her.

"I will not rise, I will not leave you! Save my father!" she exclaimed, and began sobbing hysterically.

Kalinovich's support was almost an embrace.

"Calm yourself, Katerina Ivanovna," he said. "Calm yourself! I give you my word of honour that I will wind up the case this week and hand it over to the legal authorities, where it will be a great deal easier to mitigate the lot of the accused. Finally, I assure you, I will use all my influence. We will petition for mercy to the highest authority. Believe me, no one but the Tsar can save and pardon your father—I swear it!"

Madame Chetverikova rose, thrusting a stray curl behind her ear with a reckless gesture of her exquisite hand.

"You are a bad man! God will not send you happiness!" she cried, and staggered out of the room. Paulina was waiting for her on the other side of the door.

"Tout est fini!" said the younger woman in a voice full of despair.

"I heard everything," said Paulina, no less agitated. *"Ecoutez, chère amie,"* she continued, in something like a low gabble, as she led her friend into the drawing-room. "I know you go and see him. Let me go in your carriage instead. I can't go in my own, they wouldn't let me in. Do let me! I must, I will see him! Poor man, he is suffering on my account."

"Yes, go, Paulina, go, *chère amie!* But, dear God, what will happen to him?" cried Madame Chetverikova. And the two ladies, sobbing, rushed into each other's arms.

In the meanwhile Kalinovich stood in the same pose as before, holding on to the back of an arm-chair.

"They will all curse me, everyone hates me, and what for?" he said, with an ironical smile. And then, with an effort to distract his mind from his troubles and busy himself over something, he rang his bell.

The same footman came into the room.

"There's a man waiting on the stairs. Send him up," said Kalinovich.

The man in the torn coat appeared.

"Who are you?" asked the Vice-Governor sternly.

"I'm a prompter, Your Excellency," replied the man. "Our company is to come here, you see, and Madame Minayeva, our leading lady, you know, said to me: 'You'll get there before us, Mikheich, and so go straight to His Honour, the Vice-Governor, and give him this here note from me.' I have been bidden to hand you this letter, Your Excellency."

With these words and a dandified gesture the prompter handed Kalinovich a small envelope, then retreated a few steps, and struck the pose usually assumed by stage footmen in knee-breeches, a role which no doubt he often played.

"What's this?" said Kalinovich, opening the letter.

The contents were as follows:

"You will know by my handwriting who I am. In a few days you may see me on the stage of your theatre, and for God's sake show neither by word nor glance that you recognize me. Otherwise I cannot answer for my actions. But if you would like to see me, come the day after tomorrow to the obscure side-street where I am staying at the house of Korkin. Oh, how many, many things I have to say to you! Your..."

Kalinovich's face glowed with pleasure while reading these lines. The letter was from Nastenka! For ten years he had heard nothing of her, though he had hardly ever ceased thinking of her. And now, after ten years, this woman, who cherished a dog-like devotion to him, had given a sign of life.

"Tell me, then—will Madame Minayeva be in your company the whole winter?" he asked in a voice rendered almost pathetic by suppressed feeling.

"Precisely so, Your Excellency," replied the prompter mincingly. "It is her the public will go to see—me count on that," he added.

"So she's a good actress?" asked Kalinovich with a quaver in his voice.

The question brought a chuckle from the prompter.

"She's a marvellous actress, Your Excellency!" he replied enthusiastically. "Take me, for instance—I'm a nobody. No better than a dumb animal, but even I can't see her act without tears. I forget my words in the prompter's box, for you see it's all feeling with her. In Kaluga, for instance, the audience at the dress rehearsal were all officers, a fickle, riotous lot, but even they were touched, they sobbed as if their hearts would break. . . . God himself has given her her talent—no doubt as a reward for her angelic nature, her boundless kindness."

Mikheich began to observe that the Vice-Governor was hanging on every word, and, still more touched, burst out again:

"Take only myself, Your Excellency! I could never tell you all the kindnesses I have had from her. My salary is a very small one, three rubles a month, and bread has got dearer now. I have to dress decently in a post like mine. I'm not just anyone—I'm an actor. I can't go about in an old shabby coat. It's appalling how one's clothes get worn out in that wretched prompter's box, the dirt . . . the damp . . . it's appalling. And noticing me in my wretched condition, she said straight out: 'Mikheich,' she said, 'come and live with us. I'll look after you.' 'Thank you, Madame, thank you,' says I. Why not? I'm always ready to serve. She has that uncle of hers living with her. I am always ready to look after his clothes and his boots. But he won't let me. He does everything himself."

"And does her uncle live with her?" asked Kalinovich, leaning his head against the back of his arm-chair.

"Yes, Your Excellency, he's a good old man. And how he loves Nastasia Petrovna—her own father couldn't take better care of her! Though it would be a sin to say a word against our young lady. She's not one of your flighty ones. Your Excellency knows what they're like perhaps—other professional ladies have two or three men at a time hanging round them, but we live as in a cloister, if we *do* belong to a theatrical company! No man ever shows his nose in our house, though there's a many would like to, but our young lady never shows preference to any of them. Sometimes, when I see how her youth is passing by in vain, I feel sorry, and I say straight out, in our frank way, you know: 'Nastasia Petrovna, how is it you don't seem to take pleasure in anyone, you should fall in love, you know, amuse yourself with a little *amour*.' But she only says: 'Oh, Mikheich, my friend,' she says, 'I have seen so much trouble in my life and I have no de-

sires left now.' And you know, if it wasn't for that, our young lady really could find some nice gentleman to make her happy. She would do credit to anyone," concluded Mikheich with a rather sly smile, and his words fell like burning drops into the heart of Kalinovich who could hardly conceal his emotion.

"Very well, very well," he interrupted hastily. "My greetings to Nastasia Petrovna, and say I will certainly be at the theatre, and will take advantage of all she has written to me. Understand?"

"I understand, Your Excellency," replied Mikheich with a knowing glance.

"Mind you tell her!" urged Kalinovich. "And here's something to go on with," he added, picking up a bill for fifty rubles and handing it to the prompter.

The latter retreated a step.

"You offer me so large a reward, Your Excellency," he said, "that I dare not accept it."

"Never mind, take it, and go! Only don't tell anyone!"

"Very good, Your Excellency," said Mikheich and, scraping his foot elegantly, he tiptoed out of the room.

Left to himself Kalinovich clasped his hands piously before the crucifix hanging in the corner.

"Oh, Lord, I thank thee for sending me this guardian angel! I shall no longer be alone. She will save me from the foes and miscreants around me!" he exclaimed and sank exhausted on to his chair. Tears flowed down his cheeks—his expression was blissful. It was as if, in the midst of a cold, death-dealing blizzard, the fragrance of spring had come to him, and the warm, bright, revivifying sun was shining again. Ten years of hateful domesticity and the bleak cares of office seemed to have vanished. His youth, with its love, joys and dreams, rose before him once more. "Oh, God, I thank thee! Such moments of bliss are worth years of moral torments! Oh, God, I thank thee!" he repeated over and over again.

VIII

Just at the end of Nikolskaya Street, the town's most important thoroughfare, beyond a few small wooden dwellings, in the windows of which flowers and children's heads could sometimes be seen, stands the huge grey prison, very gloomy with its high wall and iron roof. Everything in it appeared to be in order—the rifles of the watchmen were stacked, and a soldier, blue with cold, stood before the striped sentry-box. Dusk was falling. Lights showed here and there all over the building.

On the right side, in the guardroom, sat the ensign on duty, a Pole named Limovsky. His flat feminine features contrasted oddly with his officer's uniform, and he was at that moment smoking a pipe, deep in the most romantic dreams of his native land and the beautiful Polish ladies. To live in society, to be acquainted with charming ladies, to dance—such was the sum of the ensign's aspirations. In his anxiety to appear a society man he tried to speak as gently as possible, and always selected the most tender phrases.

Not far from the middle gate a smart young non-commissioned officer Karpenko walked up and down. He was a much greater stickler for the proprieties than his senior officer was, and it would have been hard for anyone to get past him; even when it was only a dog that ran by on the platform he kicked it hard, growling: "Running about here, the devil!" But just then a carriage with all the blinds down stopped in front of the guardhouse. The liveried footman jumping from the back of the carriage went first to the inspector of the prison, after which he approached the officer, with the words:

"The Countess. Open the gates, please."

"Not allowed," replied Karpenko laconically, with a strong Ukrainian accent.

"What d'you mean 'not allowed'? It's the Countess," protested the footman.

"What's that to me, if it's not allowed? The Governor was here yesterday, with the chief of police, and they gave orders to admit nobody. The Countess!" repeated the corporal.

"Come now! I've just been to the inspector. He gave permission," said the footman.

"I've had no orders. What's the inspector to me? He's not my chief. I have my own officer here. Inspector, indeed!" said Karpenko roughly.

"And your officer will allow her," said the footman and ran off.

"He will, will he?" snarled the corporal.

"The Countess is here, Your Honour, and the soldiers won't let her in," announced the footman, entering the guardroom.

The ensign leaped to his feet.

"Oh, my God, my God!" he cried, running out immediately.

"Open the gates!" he shouted at the corporal.

"Not allowed, Your Honour," Karpenko ventured to object.

"Open, fool!" shouted the most genteel of ensigns in threatening tones, and, like a true knight, fairly flew into a rage in defence of the lady. The next moment, assuming as courteous a smile as he could, he approached the carriage.

"Pardon, Madame, a thousand pardons! Allow me to give you my arm," he said, helping out of the carriage a lady muffled in voluminous garments.

"There's no doing anything with those soldiers of ours!" he said, offering his arm to the lady. "I must admit I have long wished to present myself at your house, but had not the courage, not knowing how this would be taken, but if you will allow me..."

"We should be delighted," replied the lady in a strange voice.

"It would be the most unexpected pleasure for me," exclaimed the ensign enthusiastically. "But you tremble, Madame," he went on. "Be firm, do not lose heart, I beseech you! And for God's sake, for God's sake, cross this terrible threshold carefully, do not hurt your charming foot," he implored as they passed through the inner court.

When they got to the staircase of the building itself the lady's fears increased. The stinking, suffocating air took her breath away. The sound of fetters could be heard almost next to her. She stepped aside involuntarily. A prisoner with a shaven head and chains on his hands and feet was led past them. From the distance came the sound of loud, recriminatory voices. In the half-dark of the corridor the barrels and bayonets of the guards' muskets could be dimly discerned.

"The Count is here," said the ensign at last, leading her up to a glass door. "I wish you a pleasant interview, and recommend myself to your gracious attention," he concluded, and, opening the door to admit the lady, he returned to the guardroom, there to dream at his leisure of the reception he could expect in such a fine house.

In the meantime the lady, entering, caught sight of the Count, seated, deep in thought, his elbow resting on a small table. Before him was a lighted tallow candle. The slightly curling hair on his temples was quite grey. The haggardness of his face was further emphasized by his untrimmed moustache and flowing beard, which was also streaked with grey. The Count still wore his grand velvet dressing-gown, his clean shirt was unbuttoned, exposing his white chest. In a word, despite the negligent attire his manner and expressive countenance made him the handsomest man ever confined between prison walls. A light rustle heralding the approach of a lady made him turn his head. He rose in astonishment at the unexpected

visitor. Just then the lady threw back the hood of her burnous.

"My God! Paulina!" exclaimed the Count.

"Paulina herself," said she, drawing nearer.

The Count seized her hand and began covering it with kisses. She sank down on his prison cot in exhaustion.

"How are you?" she asked, at a loss for words.

"Not very well, unfortunately," replied the Count, sinking on to a chair.

They gazed into each other's eyes for some time, as if anxious to see which of them had suffered most during the last few days.

"How did you get away from your Argus-eyed spouse?" said the Count at last.

"In the Countess's carriage. Under her name," replied Paulina. "I have brought you money. Catherine told me yesterday. . . . Here are two thousand rubles," she added, producing a thick pocket-book.

"*Merci*," brought out the Count, kissing her hand and thrusting the money into the pocket of his dressing-gown with trembling fingers.

There were tears in his eyes.

"So Catherine went to see you?" he asked, after a short silence.

"Yes, she tried to intercede for you with him. . . ."

"Well, and with what results?"

"None at all, of course."

The Count's face assumed a gloomy expression.

"H'm," he grunted scornfully, and seemed to be trying to say something, but without success.

"He's having his revenge on you because of me," continued Paulina. "It's all because of me."

"Of course. But how did he find out? Did he get it from the Evil One himself?"

"I told him!" said Paulina in a choked voice.

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"Madness!" he exclaimed. "A child . . . a schoolgirl . . . would have known better than that. How could you!"

"I couldn't help it," she answered. "You remember very well how I married him. I'm not an absolutely fallen woman. I wanted to be his real wife and confessed to him as a man on his deathbed confesses. I opened my whole soul, my whole heart to him, and instead of encouraging this impulse in me he used the weapon I had given him against me." Paulina paused, smiled bitterly, and continued: "What hurts me most of all is that, though he married me for nothing but my money, and was never a real husband to me, he nevertheless persecutes me, takes his revenge on me, for my past. At first when I was still foolish enough to reproach him for his coldness, his contempt of me, he asked me outright whether I thought women like me had a right to expect love from their husbands. Imagine having to hear that. And later, in Petersburg, when we had guests and with regard to some rather scandalous love-story someone would say: 'Just fancy, how could they?' or something of the sort, he would at once declare that one would do better to be severe to oneself in such cases than to others, that one should watch one's own conduct. And I couldn't help blushing. I have endured this torture ten years, my friend, perpetually expecting insults and humiliation."

"The scoundrell!" cried the Count.

"Dreadful!" agreed Paulina. "He's a terrible man, I tell you. Once he drove me to such distraction with his pinpricks that I told him to his face what you'd said—remember?—that he was just our tool. 'Don't you dare treat me like that!' I said. 'You haven't the slightest right to feel an injured husband. We picked you out of the dirt, made a man of you, gave you money. . . .' He said nothing, just bit his thin, smooth lip and turned pale. 'You are right,' he said. 'This is the first true word you ever said. Thanks for the lesson.' And he went away. Of course I

knew very well matters wouldn't end there. And so it was—whoever came to us after that, even if the drawing-room was full of people he would be sure to start proving 'how base and ignominious our gentry were,' and that you—forgive me—were the perfect representative of this rotten class—a loathsome, hateful, evil man, so depraved that not only are you a swindler yourself, but you feel a diabolical pleasure in perverting others. I made a vow to take no notice whatever, as if I had not understood. He saw that wasn't enough—it didn't affect me sufficiently—and he suddenly started those fulminations against bribes he glories in so, saying straight out, in front of visitors, that my father, when a regimental colonel in Poland, stole, and in proof of which he referred to me, trying to make a daughter bear witness against her own father."

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"I tell you," continued Paulina, "he's a very cautious man about what he says, you know, but if it is a matter of heaping insults on me, he becomes absolutely mad, he forgets all decency and now . . . this business with you. He pretends it's his love of justice, his impartiality, his duty to the service—all lies! It's nothing but revenge on you, and the chief object is—me. He knows very well that my love for you will live, for you are the only person who ever really loved me and whom I am bound to love my whole life. He sees this and, in order to strike a blow at the only soft spot left in my heart, he got up this accursed case, and if only God delivers you," continued Paulina with intense animation, "I will leave him and live at your side, whatever the world may say. If they send you away I will follow you to Siberia! Let everyone see that his wife has left him for a lover, for the man he ruined out of revenge! I know how that would wound his pride and what a stain it would be on his reputation, which he cherishes as something sacred, the scoundrel."

The Count could see how savage Paulina was with her

husband, and knew very well that a woman is capable of practically anything in such a mood.

"And you still love me, my friend?" he said in wheedling tones, and went to sit beside her on the bed, taking her hand.

Paulina blushed scarlet.

"I do, I do!" she replied, proudly ecstatic.

The Count kissed her. Her face flamed.

"He may not say so, but I know he is jealous of you to this day. At least let him have something to be jealous of!" she cried.

"Yes, let him!" echoed the Count.

"There's a limit to patience, after all. Even a stone can burst asunder in ten years. I don't know how to revenge myself on him for all the injuries he has dealt me, and is still dealing me," said Paulina.

The Count pondered.

"The only thing left for you to do," he began slowly, "is to write a letter to the Baroness—tell her all about your appalling married life, and explain that this gentleman has worked himself up to such a pitch in his hatred that he is beginning to take revenge on your relatives and that I have become his first victim . . . perhaps they would stand up for me there . . . a dog, let alone a human being, ought not to be left in the unscrupulous power of an embittered and prejudiced tyrant. Where are justice and truth here?"

"I'm quite ready to do this, but what could *she* do?" replied Paulina.

"She could do a great deal—talk, shout, demand, call it a crying shame. And since in Petersburg they don't like to do anything for nothing, you could add in your letter that, considering yourself guilty of my misfortune, you are ready to sacrifice half your fortune to save me."

"I am," agreed Paulina.

"Or," continued the Count, putting his hand to his head

as if trying to find another solution, "you might go to Petersburg yourself. I'll give you instructions how to act and draw up a list of the people you must see on my account."

"Go myself! Why, he'd never let me."

"The deuce take him! Don't ask him! Are you in possession of your own money and effects?"

"I am," said Paulina.

"Then pack everything, choose a day when he isn't at home, hire horses and go . . . all that will only take about half an hour."

Paulina shook her head mournfully.

"I'm terrified of him! If you only knew the terror he inspires in me! He has undermined my character, my will. I become a perfect child the moment I begin talking to him," she said desperately.

"You fear you know not what! But I am threatened by hard labour. Think, Paulina, you must take pity on me! Your proposal to follow me to Siberia is nonsense, childishness! If we do not act now when escape may still be possible you will be left to your conjugal bliss, and I shall be sent to the mines. It's heartless! You said yourself that you are the cause of my ruin. Then try and help me a little. . . ."

"Oh, God!" cried Paulina. "Surely you do not doubt that if it depended on me. . . ."

"But it does," he interrupted her.

Paulina sobbed. But just then there was a noise outside, and steps could be plainly heard in the passage. The Count started and leaped from her side. And she, too, not knowing why, was frightened, and hurriedly dried her tears.

"What's that?" she asked.

"I don't know," whispered the Count.

The door opened and in came Kalinovich in full uni-

form, wearing his crosses. He was accompanied by Inspector Mediokritsky, pale as death.

Paulina held on to the arm of the chair, to prevent herself from falling. My hero's face was distorted and twitching. But another moment, a smile vanquished all signs of feeling.

"The ladies are so fond of you, Count, that I positively am unable to refuse their requests to visit you, and have even allowed my wife to do so, though this is altogether against the law," he said quite loudly.

"I am most grateful to you," replied the Count.

"Your room does not seem to be very comfortable," said Kalinovich. "I will try to have you moved to a better one. And now I have come for you," he added, turning to Paulina, "we will go home in my carriage."

"Very well," she replied.

"So let's be off. I'm quite ready," concluded Kalinovich, pointing to the door.

Paulina went out obediently.

"Good-bye," said Kalinovich to the Count, and he followed his wife.

They were met and helped into the carriage by the polite, but now alarmed ushnik.

"I allow ladies to come and see the Count," he said. "How can one refuse a lady?"

"How indeed?" said Kalinovich, slamming the door and pulling up the window.

Mediokritsky could only stare after him with blank, unseeing eyes.

On the way the coachman thought he heard voices in the carriage, and had a mind to pull up, supposing that his master and mistress had called to him. But very soon all was quiet. When they got to the house Kalinovich went straight to his study. The servant carried Paulina out of the carriage almost unconscious, and led her to her side of the house. Her face was again muffled in her hood.

IX

The Vice-Governor's visit to the prison had the most drastic consequences. The Count was moved to a cell with an iron door, in which only one member of the gentry had been kept ever since the prison had been built—a certain Vasily Zamyatin, who had pursued a career of robbery and violence on the highroads for ten years. The battalion commander was given strict orders, as coming from the head of the gubernia, that officers on sentry duty at the prison were on no account to allow any outsider to visit prisoner Count Ivan Ramensky while the inquiry into his case was going on. The administration of the gubernia was requested to dismiss Inspector Mediokritsky from his post without right of appeal, for dereliction of duty.

On the evening before giving up his post the unfortunate inspector sat with drooping head in the damp, gloomy cell of the Count. A tallow candle burned dimly on the table. Not far from it were a plate with a half-eaten cucumber on it and a square bottle of vodka, from which Mediokritsky had already drunk a glass or two. The Count was pacing up and down. It was evident that an extremely serious conversation had just taken place between them.

"Kindly tell me what that scoundrel of a cantonist* says."

"Don't you worry about the cantonist, Your Excellency," replied Mediokritsky stoutly. "He's been in prison three times, and twice been flogged through the ranks. He's thoroughly broken in, he won't talk. I have been through the whole case from the first line to the last. He says outright: 'I can't write,' he says, 'not only in another hand, but in my own.' He doesn't even sign his name to testimony. I tell you he's a past master. Now they keep

* Soldier's son, pledged at birth to join the army when of age.—*Tr.*

trying to find out who he really is. But if he tells them he'll be flogged again, and he doesn't want that. He gives out he doesn't remember his name, and sticks to it whatever they do to him. 'Let them put me in a penal battalion,' he says, 'so long as it isn't corporal punishment.' And why should he talk about you? Why should he? Tell me that! He might as well put his own head on the block. And he knows that, he understands it very well."

"Well, and the engraver?" asked the Count, still pacing up and down.

"The engraver is doing very well too. The old man knows what to say," said Mediokritsky, not without admiration. "'Yes, I did cut a seal for the Count, but it was only a crest for his name, nothing else. Since our craft obliges us to make official seals on the demand of no one but State officials,' he says, 'how and on what grounds could I do it for a private person?'"

"Clever," remarked the Count.

"Very clever," remarked Mediokritsky too.

"No one but my Petrushka has chattered, it seems," said the Count, "and what a beast he turned out."

"Your Pyotr doesn't matter a bit, not a bit!" declared Mediokritsky. "In the first place the evidence of serfs is only accepted against their masters in special cases. And in the second place he would be forswearing himself."

"Forswearing?"

"Yes—forswearing. The other day he was confronted with the runaway soldier who broke him down on all the points. 'You say you saw me at the master's,' he said. 'What was I wearing?' 'You had on this and that.' 'Very good,' says he, 'then where do I keep these clothes? Wouldn't the investigators care to examine my things?' And of course there were no such clothes there. He sells all his clothes for drink three times a week, and gets new ones. 'You say you saw me at the master's house—what other servants of his saw me? I'm not a needle, I'm a

man. Who else saw me?' 'I don't know who else saw you.' 'There you are, old man, it seems you say more than you know. Think well, you blockhead, was it me you saw?' 'Perhaps,' says he, 'it wasn't you.' In a word, he confused him nicely."

"Nicely," echoed the Count.

"And he hasn't done with him yet—just you wait!" continued Mediokritsky mysteriously. "I don't know how it will be under the new inspector, but I had him in with Gaffer Samoila. The old man's a dissenter, you may have seen him—long white beard. . . . He's a regular dab at this sort of thing, not a single prisoner leaves the prison for interrogation now without his instructions, and he's a knowing old chap . . . knows the law . . . he's been in and out of prisons for the last seven years. And he does it not for the sake of profit, but for the salvation of his own soul. 'If I don't instruct those who walk in darkness,' he says, 'what hope have they of mercy afterwards?' He said straight away: 'All power comes from God alone, Petrushka, and you, I hear, are going against your own master. That's not right, old man! Besides, if things go badly with your master you won't go free, either.' 'Oh, Gaffer,' said Petrushka, 'what am I to do now, seeing that I have already given such replies?' When I heard him say that I put in a word. 'Come now, old man,' I said, 'don't say that! We know very well how your first evidence was obtained. We saw the birch rods brought in. They probably used two or three bundles on you.' 'That they did, Your Honour!' he says, 'that's how it was!'"

"Oh, the scoundrels!" exclaimed the Count, with a gesture of disgust.

"After the third trouncing," confirmed Mediokritsky, "why, of course, he took fright and blabbed. And now he must apply all over again to the prosecutor and explain

at the interrogation that all his former evidence was obtained by intimidation, that's what we tell him."

"Intimidation? Yes! That's good!" said the Count, nodding approvingly.

"Yes, that's good. And the whole case might have gone splendidly. The engraver says they intimidated *him*, too. And as for the cantonist, only promise him ten rubles and he'll show the scars where he was beaten. His whole back is covered with stripes from former punishments, and there you have evidence whenever you want it. Yes, and if you now declare that your first evidence was obtained under threat of torture, which they used despite your rank as a nobleman and a gentleman, why, they'll be smashed to smithereens," concluded Mediokritsky eagerly.

"To smithereens!" repeated the Count.

"That they will! They will be made strictly responsible under the law. But their main support at present is evidence. They say the document was drawn up by you and presented at your request. And now, supposing all persons involved in your case are eliminated from it, the government will be obliged to look for other witnesses, won't they? For the forged document does exist and in the eyes of the law it was you alone who drew it up."

The Count turned pale.

"It must be stolen," he said, biting the ends of his moustache. "It must be stolen at all costs."

Mediokritsky chuckled.

"Not stolen, but, as I then proposed, exchanged—there was an excellent opportunity. The evidence from the same gubernia, the same district, supplied by that old postmaster. The two documents were formulated identically, and yet there was nothing to be done. They say, not only has the chief of police now refused to give the original to the clerks, but he won't even take it to the police. He makes all interrogations without taking notes,

because he's very much afraid—he's looking out for himself, too. Did you ever hear of such a thing? The head of the gubernia gives orders for the carrying out of investigations, and attends them himself. Why, it's as good as telling the investigator: 'Act according to *my* wishes!' And since the investigator is a subordinate, he does so, of course. Whoever heard of such a thing?"

"Yes, indeed," agreed the Count.

"It's outrageous," repeated Mediokritsky. "If it weren't for this illegal insistence on the part of the Vice-Governor, would your case have developed as it has? Wouldn't that chief of police have been ready to compromise for a consideration? As if we didn't know him! Haven't we seen with our own eyes that everything he does is based on his own interests? For two or three thousand he would have given you back, not just your illegal testimony, he would have put all the papers into your hands—'take them and burn them, we'll get some new ones!' There have been cases, even cases of murder, in which blood has cried to Heaven, and thank God, you haven't taken human life so far! And afterwards you could simply have written that you certainly presented testimony, but it was about the postmaster's estate. And why the authorities have taken matters into their own hands and subjected you to imprisonment, you do not know, and have complained several times of the matter to the criminal police and also to the prosecutor."

The Count meditated.

"I have no power of attorney from that old devil, there is no way of obtaining it in retrospect," he objected.

"Never mind about a power of attorney, don't you worry," cried Mediokritsky. "They are to blame for having allowed you, without producing any guarantees, to take part in the competing. They have no old diary of the commission. I frightened the secretary about it then, referring to your words. He burned it in my presence, and

then, from stupidity and from fright, hanged himself. So they can't draw up a new one now, and if they did, there would be no getting it countersigned by a dead man. We could base our objections on that very fact, and mix them up so thoroughly that the devil himself would be unable to make out who is fighting whom. And we know what the limits of the legal authorities are, too. If your case could be muddled and mixed up like that, there would be very little grounds to throw suspicion on you, and even that could be appealed against."

The Count thoroughly realized that what Mediokritsky said was almost true. The hope of *remaining only under suspicion* flashed before him in all the beauty of its rainbow hues.

"What are we to do then, eh?" he asked.

Mediokritsky shrugged his shoulders.

"The only thing to be done is to try and get your relative and our common persecutor removed," he said in a voice of desperate resolution. And then, after a pause, he went on in a kind of melancholy ecstasy: "And how grateful everyone would be to you for that, it is impossible to express. You ought to hear what they say at the Board alone—the university men laud him to the skies, of course, but all the other officials groan beneath his yoke. It has always been the way for a petitioner to go straight to the department. There they give him some reference or other and he hands them a ruble or two—but now that's all over—not even a dog can get into the office if nobody knows it. They all sit behind locked doors like so many prisoners. As soon as a caller appears he is sent straight to the Court House. The papers are brought there for him, and everything necessary is read and explained to him. Whoever heard of such a thing? Why, it means depriving an official of his last crust."

The Count hardly listened to Mediokritsky, he seemed to be thinking of something else.

"Take me, for instance," went on Mediokritsky and tossed off yet another glass of vodka. "Why does that man hunt me, persecute me my whole life? What for? Just because I smeared the gate of his mistress (and, be it said, mine too!) with tar. Didn't she deserve it, the hussy? He has persecuted me ever since, so that I shall remember it to the end of my life."

"Yes . . . and now he's still persecuting everyone," replied the Count.

"And look how low I have fallen!" interrupted Mediokritsky. "I was once a senior secretary. And a decent copyist to the Gubernatorial Board wouldn't take the post they've given me, but he's so spiteful he grudges me and my children the prisoners' fare we lived on, he has deprived me of even this. A master is forbidden by law to mark the passport of a drunken peasant when he gives him the sack, in case it prevents him from earning a crust of bread somewhere else, but an official can't even count on that. Where am I to go, I ask you? Every new chief, taking a look at my papers, will say: 'You were once secretary of the Gubernatorial Board, dear Sir, you have been degraded to the post of prison inspector, and now you have been dismissed. How can I employ you?' He knew that very well, the malicious creature, when he behaved to me as he did, and what am I to do after that? I'm not strong enough for work in the fields, I've never been trained to any craft, my rank will not allow me to become a cab driver, only one thing remains to me—to get a knife and become a highway robber."

With these words Mediokritsky actually melted into tears, wiping his eyes on a cotton handkerchief.

"That's all nonsense, time will remedy it, but here is another possibility," drawled the Count. "That gentleman was made what he is by his wife, and maintains his position solely through her good will."

"So they say," corroborated Mediokritsky.

"Yes," continued the Count, "and this wife, as you are aware, is my relative and, as a good and magnanimous woman, thoroughly understands the baseness of her husband's act, and this very day has written to me that she will go to Petersburg in a few days' time for the purpose of taking steps."

Mediokritsky listened to the Count, his head bent low.

"And therefore," continued the Count, "tomorrow you will be so good as to call on her on my behalf. You will be admitted. Tell her of our conversation of today, and do your best to explain to her what exactly we want, and what is to be done first."

"I can do that," replied Mediokritsky meekly.

"Yes, but there's another thing: she is after all only a woman, and despite her desires and opportunities will not be in a position to carry this out by herself or to make plans, especially as it may be necessary to give information against several people or hand in a report."

"Certainly," replied Mediokritsky as meekly as before.

"It is essential, therefore, for her to have someone to guide her, and if you like I will recommend her to take you to Petersburg as a man devoted to me and knowing all about the case."

Mediokritsky's face shone with pleasure, which he did his utmost to conceal.

"There is nothing for you to do here any more," said the Count in conclusion.

"I know there isn't," agreed Mediokritsky, "but I tell you frankly, Your Excellency," he added after a short pause, smiling wryly, "in my present unfortunate situation it will be impossible for me to do work unpaid."

"Who said you wouldn't be paid, deuce take it? You can ask for whatever you want," said the Count.

Mediokritsky's face expressed his delight.

"I shan't need any more than anyone else would, Your Excellency. Officials go from here to Petersburg, and

only for civil actions, not criminal cases, have almost all charged the same, to a farthing: a thousand five hundred a year for maintenance, plus a third or a half of the claim itself, and if your case ends prosperously, I shall be satisfied with ten thousand silver rubles in excess of salary."

"Ten thousand! Why, it's a fortune! Come now!" expostulated the Count.

"How else could it be?" said Mediokritsky, his head on one side. "Take that information, now. If it's anonymous it will hardly be credited at all, but if it's signed, then it's very responsible—the Vice-Governor is an important personage, complaining to the government about him is not just like bringing accusations against some mayor. No doubt he has a score of supporters in Petersburg, every one of whom will take it as a personal affront. I'm a nobody, anyone can grind me to powder. They can pick on some incautious word and hand me over to the criminal police—and I know what *they're* like. When I was district police commissary I was sued for mere trifles, for delays, and didn't I have to keep a whole lot of riff-raff in food and drink! I was almost ruined! And it's not for you," continued Mediokritsky persuasively, "to grudge a little money, for it must be frankly said that your head is in the lion's jaws or lies on the scaffold, so long as that man remains in power."

"Oh, well, to hell with the money! We'll come to terms," interrupted the Count.

"Of course," agreed Mediokritsky, and began reasoning mournfully, as if talking to himself: "If the King of Heaven helps us to bring this man low, I will not grudge a new chasuble of beaten gold for our Holy Mother and Protectress, the guardian of this city."

"Precisely," said the Count. "And so," he went on, as if anxious to get rid of his companion as quickly as possible, "we will—"

"We can discuss that later," interrupted Mediokritsky. "Let's get down to business now. Allow me, however, to gird up my loins for my journey," he added, pouring himself out a glass of vodka.

"With pleasure," said the Count, suppressing a grimace, and he accepted with obvious distaste the hand held out to him by Mediokritsky, who bowed and walked quietly and meekly out of the room.

The presence of mind which had, as we have seen, supported the Count till now, suddenly deserted him. Throwing himself on the sofa he gave a profound sigh, and groaned: "Miseryl Miseryl!"

I must admit that it has been intolerable for me, a humble narrator, to carry this scene to its end, and I turn the eye of my mind with the utmost joy and love to the immediate future, in which there gleams for my hero, in his bleak life, such complete, sincere, and youthful, if evanescent, happiness.

X

Two lamps burned before the entrance to the theatre. A mounted gendarme stood there, armed like a knight from head to foot, and employing all his mental powers to make the horse beneath him stand still. Another gendarme walked up and down rattling his sword. A policeman, wearing a shako and carrying a stick, paced back and forth, exchanging courtesies with the Marshal's postillion.

"Can't you keep still, hobbledehoy?" he grumbled.

"Can't you stop growling?" countered the postillion.

"How can I help growling, if you don't know how to behave, you devil, you!"

"Devil yourself!" replied the postillion, tugging at the horse's head.

"Yes, devils! Set of devils! Go on, growl at me again," replied the policeman, retreating a step.

The fat coachman of the adviser to the vodka licence office, having obtained a free drink on the strength of his master's position, drowsed on the box seat. The lean horse of the director of the Gymnasium, which lived modestly on the oats of the establishment, for some reason took it into its head to paw the earth imperiously, thus causing intense amusement to the lanky dullard who was the assessor's coachman.

"Just look how she lifts her hoofs! What a slyboots she is, lad!" he said to the coachman.

"Slyboots! She's a regular devil, that's what she is!" replied the coachman.

"A devil?"

"A devil," said the coachman, and after this nothing worthy of note occurred in front of the theatre. But everyone in the gubernia, where there was so little to amuse, was assembled in expectation of seeing Minayeva, said to be such an excellent actress, in the part of Eilalia, in Kotzebue's famous tragic drama—*Misanthropy and Repentance*. The tragic actor was said to be very good, too, and very spiritual. The auditorium was lighted by two rows of lamps in honour of such a solemn performance. The curtain, which depicted the town square, stirred mysteriously, and every now and then an inquisitive human eye peeped through the usual hole in the middle. The stalls were crowded with men, amongst whom shone a fair number of heads as smooth and bald as the palm of your hand, while the gallant figure of the President of the Exchequer stood out in bold relief, as he stood in the first row leaning carelessly against the partition separating the musicians from the audience. The engineer-cornet, he who was such a brilliant pianist, was also in the first row, an overcoat with a beaver collar wrapped around him with picturesque effect. In the third or fourth row sat the stout college graduate. A midshipman on leave kept looking with narrowed eyes

through his field-glasses, turning them upon the boxes with an expression that seemed to say he was showing this splendid object to the stupid provincial public, which he supposed had never before seen such glasses. But as if to bring him down a peg the fat, profusely sweating Mikhailo Trofimich Papushkin, who sat beside him and had, by the way, paid fifty rubles for his stall, suddenly drew out his own opera-glasses, which had probably cost him seventy rubles and which were so bulky he could scarcely hold them. The midshipman was crushed. In the boxes were a brilliant company of ladies, many of whom, despite the obvious danger of catching cold, wore low dresses. Most of them had brought their children, some of whom were already beginning to cry. One box was a contrast to all the rest, being almost empty. In it was ensconced all by himself that scapegrace Kozlenev. He told everyone that he had taken a box on purpose to be able to swoon at the *heart-rending places* in the play. At last the clock struck seven. Into the theatre hurried the chief of police with an anxious countenance, who, going straight up to the President of the Exchequer, whispered in his ear. The latter turned pale. Hardly had the chief of police turned aside when the engineer-cornet addressed him:

"What's the matter? Has anything happened?"

"We have a new governor. The old man has sent in his resignation," replied the chief of police.

"Of his own accord?"

"Not a bit of it. He was told to."

"Who will come in his place?" asked the cornet, with perceptible anxiety.

"Why, probably the Vice-Governor," replied the chief of police.

The engineer's face lengthened.

"The deuce take it—the way they treat a man!" he exclaimed involuntarily, but pulled himself up immediately.

"And will he be at the theatre?" he added, glancing towards the Governor's box, where so lately his dear and accommodating patron the Governor's wife had sat, and where all was emptiness now, for she would never sit there again. The young engineer fell into profound dejection—only now did he realize that he had loved her. In the meanwhile the chief of police passed along the other rows, trying to reach the graduate, probably intending to make up to him, since everybody knew that he had become the Vice-Governor's favourite. Bending over him, he whispered:

"The Governor has been discharged, and the Vice-Governor appointed in his place."

"And high time!" exclaimed the graduate. "And a good thing, too! He's a very nice man."

The chief of police made no reply to this and exchanged glances with Papushkin.

"Is everything as I was told in Petersburg?" asked the latter.

"Exactly," replied the chief of police.

Papushkin sighed.

"Heigh-ho!" he said and fell to musing.

The news was not long in spreading to the boxes.

The agitated President of the Exchequer went at once to the box where his family was seated and whispered it into his wife's ear. She responded with a meaningful glance of her blue eyes, which were large and still beautiful. On the one hand, she feared for her husband, who had enjoyed the friendship of the former Governor, and was on terms only short of hostility with the new one, but on the other hand, she rejoiced in her heart that the Governor's lanky wife would at last be deprived of her throne. The wife of the President of the Criminal Chamber who was sitting beside her was eager to learn what it was the General had told her.

"The Governor is discharged and the Vice-Governor is

to have his place," the wife of the President of the Exchequer informed her with as much composure as the importance of the subject permitted.

The wife of the President of the Criminal Chamber behaved quite differently. Anyone who understands such things will of course realize that this lady, owing to the independence of her husband's position, had less reason than anyone else to care who was Governor. But being of a nervous disposition, every change of those in power alarmed and agitated her, and therefore she took the news very much to heart.

"Good heavens! Fancy! Good heavens!" she began exclaiming, fidgeting in her chair so that her daughter, a girl of about seventeen, who was sitting beside her, blushed for her mother.

"Don't talk so loud, Mama! Everybody's looking at you," she said. But the lady was not to be quieted.

"Good heavens, oh, good heavens!" she continued to moan, moving restlessly on the seat of her chair.

It must be admitted that the whole audience was inwardly exclaiming over the news, if not so audibly. The marvellous actress whom they had come to see was almost forgotten, and everyone waited for the appearance of the new idol on whom all thoughts were now concentrated. The police constable patrolling the street in front of the theatre was the first to espy the Vice-Governor's pair of russet trotters, and rushing fiercely at the cab just about to deposit a merchant at the entrance, began beating the driver over the head and face, yelling:

"Out of the way, you scum! Can't you see who's coming?"

"What's the matter, my good man?" protested the merchant. "We've only just driven up ourselves."

"Out of the way!" repeated the policeman and dragged the cab horse ferociously to one side. The Vice-Governor drove up. He entered the porch with a modest,

almost stooping gait. The highly presentable-looking commissary on duty at the theatre, who had just been going to light the cigarette, presented him with a glass of vodka by the proprietor of the refreshment room, turned pale at the sight of the head of the gubernia and threw the cigarette on the floor. Kalinovich was met in front of the Governor's box by the chief of police himself, who started opening the door. But the Vice-Governor shook his head and went into the stalls. His appearance in the auditorium produced an indescribable effect. All eyes were fixed on him and everyone tried to look as official as possible. The President of the Exchequer longed with all his heart for Kalinovich to greet him first. One of the favourite clerks of the old Governor changed his seat, in the hope of catching the Vice-Governor's eye, and when at last he did, bowed from the waist. Even the indolent graduate rose and nodded, smiling meaningly at Kalinovich, who answered with an equally meaning smile. The engineer-cornet, who had only the moment before spoken so rashly of him, now bowed respectfully, his hand to his forehead. The fair sex once again proved the truth of the old maxim that nothing so raises a man in its estimation as public, official success. Even Madame Potvinova, who, as everyone knows, cares only for very young men, her passion for whom led her to receive five cadets every Sunday when she was in Petersburg, even she, at the sight of a head of the gubernia still so young, let her mantilla slip carelessly from her left shoulder, thus exposing her plump neck, which she accounted first among her various feminine charms. But it was the elderly virgin, own sister to the head of the Chamber of State Property, whose heart beat the most violently. At the beginning of this section of our chronicles she had been in love with the adjutant who had come about the recruiting, but later she had secretly fallen in love with the Vice-Governor, and in her crazy infatuation approved

unreservedly of all his acts, to the extreme annoyance of her brother. Behind the curtain, too, there was excitement. The theatre proprietor, peering through the hole in it, clapped his hands with all his might when Kalinovich took his place; and the musicians struck up, the curtain was soon raised. The scene showed a rural landscape and a wretched hovel. The actor who took the part of the bailiff's imbecile son all but stood on his head in his effort to amuse the audience, but no one laughed. Then entered the Stranger, in a very high collar, and with bent head. The tragedian was greeted with applause. With an air of bitterness he began speaking of certain detested persons to his manservant, played with the utmost feeling by Mikheich, especially when it fell to him to mention Mrs. Miller. But the tragedian listened imperturbably to his tales of her kindness to the old beggar, and secretly bestowing on him a sum of money for the ransom of his son, made a solemn exit. He was again applauded. The scene then changed to a chamber in the castle. Nastenka entered in the role of the unfortunate Eilalia, concealing her identity under the name of Mrs. Miller. The men in the stalls began clapping immediately. The ladies, fired with curiosity, fixed their lorgnettes on her. Kozlenev clapped like a maniac. The favourite clerk of the old Governor, a great deal more interested in the observation of his new chief than in the play, noticed that the Vice-Governor started. Nastenka, too, appeared embarrassed. Scarcely able to control herself, she began speaking in a low, natural voice, but the tone of her voice, the pensiveness of her pose, subtle play of her features, betrayed some profound, private grief, restrained suffering, underlying every word she spoke, and all listened with bated breath, only to burst out in storms of applause at the end of the monologue, when, smiling mournfully, and glancing at Kalinovich, she said: "There

is only one pair of eyes in the world whose glances I fear."

Kozlenev, perfectly serious, and not in the least abashed by his conspicuous position in a box, banged on the ledge of the box and stamped his feet. Even the President of the Exchequer, forgetting all about the new Governor, said almost aloud: "Good! Very good!" while the favourite clerk, continuing his observations, noticed that the eyes of the Vice-Governor, who neither spoke nor clapped, were bright with unshed tears. In a word, though the audience, with its under-developed aesthetic sensibilities, was of the rougher sort, the heart made itself felt, and when the curtain fell, all remained as if stunned by a sensation never before experienced, scarcely even realizing what it was. For the first time they were confronted on the stage not by an actress, but by a woman, the sincerity of whose sufferings was probably not to be matched in real life, in which, as everyone knows, there are so many hypocritical females. In the second act the actress produced a still greater impression on her audience. She conversed like a woman of the world with the major, while modestly shrinking from the gratitude of the old beggar. And finally she received her master and mistress, the Count and Countess, and rendered assistance when the Count fell into the water. And every member of the audience, including, I feel sure, that lout of a peasant whose red beard hung over the side of the gallery, could feel how hard all this was for her. Almost all the younger women in the audience realized more clearly than they had before that they too, for the greater part, were doomed to just such dissimulation—and realizing this, brushed away a secret tear. The ecstatic sister of the President of the Chamber of State Property, throwing herself back in her seat, declared:

"It's terrible! If I were her I would have died."

When the act came to an end all were deeply interested to know what the denouement would be.

"Marvellous actress, marvellous!" could be heard everywhere.

"Adorable!" was the ladies' verdict.

"I never saw anyone like her except once in Warsaw, when we were posted there. There's no one like her either in Moscow or in Petersburg," the President of the Exchequer told everyone.

Kalinovich sat with bowed head.

In the third act the drama came to its climax. The Countess conveyed to the poor Eilalia a proposal from her brother, the honest major. There could be no reason to reject the offer, but she cannot accept it, for she considers that she has not yet suffered enough.

"Did you ever hear anything about Baroness Meinau?" she asks.

"Yes," replies the Countess. "I seem to remember having heard something about that creature—I was told she caused a most honourable man to suffer."

"The most honourable," agrees Nastenka, casting a glance at Kalinovich.

"She left him to run away with some scoundrel," continued the Countess.

"Yes," agrees Nastenka once more. "But..." And her speech is impeded by suffocating sobs. "But..." And here she throws herself on her knees. "Do not cast me away, give me some corner where I may die in peace."

"In God's name ... you!" asks the Countess, deeply moved.

"That creature—is I," replies Nastenka in hollow tones.

The audience had an impulse to clap, but instead listened in a silence which was almost solemn.

"I assure you I will be silent," says the Countess, raising her to her feet.

"And my conscience? Can the conscience ever be silent?" asks Nastenka.

The audience could no longer restrain itself and thundered its applause. The unhappy woman resumed her confession with a kind of desperate calm.

"And I had a spouse worthy of love," she said.

"Calm yourself!" the Countess said, trying to console her.

"God knows whether he is alive or dead."

"Your glance has become terrible," the Countess informed her. And indeed a film seemed to have come over Nastenka's eyes.

"For me he is dead," she declared, letting her hands drop helplessly. "I had a father," she continued, "and his grief for me killed him."

The applause broke out again. The Vice-Governor turned his head and looked towards the Governor's box. The impression made by this scene was so overwhelming that the end of the act was heard out by the audience in something like exhaustion from the sensations experienced. Nastenka begged that the curtain should not be raised for the actors to reappear, and the interval between the third and fourth acts lasted a long time. Obviously exhausted, she remained seated on a bench on the stage. In front of her stood Kozlenev, an expression of enthusiasm on his face.

"Mademoiselle Minayeva, you are exquisite! It was a miracle!" he breathed. "You act divinely. I am sure to fall in love with you—I warn you!"

"And I shall not fall in love with you. I warn you of that, too," replied Nastenka ungraciously, gazing at the other actors who had suddenly assumed respectful postures among the sets, for the lean figure of the Vice-Governor could be seen approaching in the distance.

"Look here!" she said hastily. "Go back to your box. Leave me alone. I am tired, and I still have a very hard act before me."

"Why—am I in your way, my treasure?" cried Kozlenev reproachfully.

"Yes, you are. Go—I demand it . . . you are intolerable!" said Nastenka.

Kozlenev shrugged his shoulders.

"Hi, there, you impl!" he said to one of the scene shifters. "Let me down into that hole or I shall never get out of here!"

"Yes, down with him, Mikhailo, and be quick about it! I'll give you a ruble," said Nastenka.

"Certainly," replied the man, and began to let the trapdoor sink with Kozlenev on it.

"I descend into hell, a captive for ever!" exclaimed Kozlenev, stretching up his arms.

At this moment Kalinovich arrived on the stage from the opposite side, accompanied by the proprietor of the theatre, a stout and clever fellow, formerly a lawyer to the vodka licence dealers and now occupying himself with theatre business.

"How nice it is here, to be sure! I have never been here before," said the Vice-Governor, looking round him.

"It's all right now, thank God," replied the proprietor, rubbing his hands together. "I have had five new sets of scenery made, Your Excellency. And the walls have been whitewashed, and the overhead machinery repaired. Otherwise one fine day it might have killed one of the actors. I can't go in for the theatre in a rough and ready way, like some entrepreneurs. When I came here the auditorium was like a dung-heap, not to mention the stage. I spent a couple of thousand silver rubles in a single week. I don't know if I shall have the support of the public, but it's pretty hard so far—God grant I shall be able to cover my expenses."

Of course they'll support you! The acting is so good," replied Kalinovich. "By the way I sent for a stall and a box, and I haven't paid yet. I have exactly the

amount on me," he added, handing the entrepreneur three hundred silver rubles.

The proprietor's hands trembled.

"They do act well, Your Excellency," he continued, hardly able to speak for joy. "It's a nice company, well behaved. All sorts of actors tried to get in, and good ones, but they either drink or gamble, and I wouldn't take them. I'd rather pay a little more, and at least be sure of decent persons."

"Of course," assented the Vice-Governor, glancing in the direction of Nastenka.

The proprietor noticed this.

"And how do you like our Minayeva, Your Excellency?" he asked with a sly glance.

"Very good!" said Kalinovich, with the indifference his rank demanded.

"A great actress!" the proprietor assured him. "The Lord sent me this pearl as a reward for my virtue. I don't know how it'll be here, but in Kaluga she drew very good houses."

"No wonder. She is delightful," replied the Vice-Governor, obviously anxious to go to Nastenka.

The proprietor, a man apt and experienced in such matters, saw fit to vanish. Kalinovich went straight up to her.

"How beautifully you act!" he said.

Nastenka looked at him, and oh, heavens, what tenderness and love this brief glance expressed!

"Will you come to see me after the end of the play?" she whispered.

"I will," replied Kalinovich in a voice choked with feeling and, turning aside, paid some trifling compliment to the actress who had played the countess.

"Charmed to have pleased you," replied the latter mincingly, as the Vice-Governor turned away.

The proprietor, having seen him to the door, had the

bell rung immediately for the curtain to go up. The tragedian had been deeply hurt by the indifference of the audience to his acting, but this time he too had his share of applause. The reader may perhaps remember the monologue in which Baron Meinau, concealing his identity beneath the name of the Stranger, confides the story of his misfortunes in his old friend, the major, a monologue in which the whisper of the late Mochalov still haunts the dreams, and sounds in the ears of those who once heard him. In this monologue, the Baron says that he had thought by returning to his native land to expose the age-old follies covered by the murk of century-old prejudice: "O let none who values his peace of mind ever sacrifice it to human folly. I have been driven away, oppressed!" uttered the actor emphatically. "I was regarded as a dangerous man. 'He is clever,' it was said of me everywhere, 'but he has a bad heart.'"

At these words the Vice-Governor suddenly clapped, and after him the whole audience, as if publicly delivering accusations against themselves.

"Our commanding officer died," went on the actor. "We had plenty of colonels, and I thought, I hoped, one of them would be given the vacant post. But some charmer had a cousin, an insolent dullard, who had only been in the service six months, and he was made my commander. Unable to bear this, I sent in my papers."

Again the Vice-Governor applauded, and again everyone followed his example.

"One of my friends," continued Meinau, "a man of unimpeachable honour, as I believed, cheated me out of half my fortune. I bore this and reduced my expenditure. Then came another friend, a young one—he seduced my wife. Is that enough for you? Can you forgive me for my hatred of the human race?"

The Vice-Governor clapped again, this time almost frenziedly. The audience clapped too, looking inquisi-

tively at him. And there was another spectator who was looking at him, the only one, probably, by whom he wished to be understood. This was Nastenka, standing leaning against the scenery in the wings, trembling all over, her eyes fixed on him. She had come on the stage in the scene with the husband she was supposed to have deceived, calmly resolved to assume the whole burden of guilt. But when the tragedian asked her in tones of deep emotion: "What dost thou want of me, Eilalia?" she again trembled. "For God's sake, no! I was not prepared for this. Ah, that voice pierces me to the heart! It is thou, thou—my friend! O God, most noble spouse! You should speak roughly and harshly to a criminal!" she cried so touchingly that half the people in the stalls almost rose in their seats.

"Why, she's all soul!" said the graduate, and his eyes, indeed the eyes of all—including the hundreds of gamblers, bribe-takers, even the fraudulent merchants, half-drunk footmen, and depraved ladies' maids in the gallery—filled with tears. Ladies from the highest circles, forgetting propriety, leaned over the ledges of their boxes, and now the whole scene proceeded in an atmosphere of absorbed stillness. But when the children were brought on Eilalia rushed into her husband's arms with such a heart-rending shriek that the whole audience started. The sister of the President of the Chamber of State Property fainted. Kozlenev leaned his head against the wall between his box and the next. Madame Potvinova's eight-year-old son burst out crying, and the curtain came down. There was a thunder of applause and cries of "Minayeva!" She came out for a moment. The audience called her back, she appeared in a cloak, and disappeared immediately. But the young men kept on calling for her, the bass voice of the graduate resounding above all the others. The proprietor of the theatre, however, announced from the stage that Miss Minayeva

had gone home, extremely tired. Immediately afterwards the Vice-Governor also rose. The chief of police, whom he passed on his way out, made as if to follow him, but soon came back.

"Well, has he gone?" asked the President of the Exchequer.

"Yes," replied the chief of police. "I wanted to go with him, but he wouldn't have it."

"Of course not. Remember what a song and dance the old chap would have made, no end of fuss, but this one's too clever for that," responded the president.

"Oh, of course," agreed the chief of police.

XI

The Vice-Governor's carriage drove at a gallop along Nikolskaya Street, the town's main thoroughfare, where the chief of police had given orders for all the lamps to be brightly lit, but then—and the chief of police had certainly not anticipated this—the Vice-Governor suddenly turned into Dvoryanskaya Street, where he was not expected to go and where in consequence no lamps were lit. In this street his carriage almost collided with that of the district medical inspector, whose coachman was keeping to one side to avoid a puddle.

"Blockhead! Don't you know your left hand from your right?" shouted the Vice-Governor's coachman, rapidly reining in his horse, but not in time to prevent his wheels brushing against those of the other vehicle and tearing off its braces. The inspector's coachman, in other words, a soldier on hospital duty, could hardly keep his seat.

"Look what you've done, you devil! The Vice-Governor and his cutthroats!" he was bold enough to mutter after them.

In the meantime the Vice-Governor's carriage had

turned into a side-street on the right, at a foot pace, the way being full of ruts and gullies, but the Vice-Governor cried out angrily: "Faster!" and the coachman drove so furiously that nothing but the well-tried virtues of the horizontal springs could have withstood the ensuing jolts and jars. Whither Kalinovich was speeding is no secret to us, and it would have been impossible, looking at him, to avoid the thought that God alone knows whose love is the more violent—that of a callow youth, rushing to a secret rendezvous with fevered limbs, glowing cheeks and poetically tossed locks, or that of a man whose greying hair is cut respectably short, whose life has gone on for several decades without a shadow of love, amidst the petty cares of office and intrigue, servility and the persecution and punishment of subordinates. Such a one has known and appreciated all the ineffable delights of those secret rendezvous, of that *kinship of the soul* so often ridiculed by practical persons, and yet he might sometimes be glad to pay enormous sums to revive the merest shadow of that kinship in company with some Mademoiselle Minna, of German or Spanish origin, and no longer quite young.

In the obscure side-street, in front of a small wooden house, Kalinovich cried: "Stop!" and opening the carriage door himself, plunged through the gateway. He had to cross the yard on boards which jumped up and down beneath his feet like the keys of a piano. In the tiny porch he stumbled over a tub, then bumped his head against the door, and found himself in a dark entrance, where, hastily flinging his two-thousand-ruble fur coat on the floor, he entered a shabby little room. He was greeted by a strong smell of Turkish tobacco and some dried herbs stuck behind the icon stand, and, oh, heavens, what a familiar picture met his eyes! Nastenka sat in an arm-chair, her hair dishevelled, the traces of grease paint still on her cheeks, wearing a loose frock, half-open

over the bosom. On a card table covered with scorched baize stood a samovar, and there was the Captain bending over it, in what appeared to be the very same, long-lived uniform with polished buttons. And there was his short meerschaum lying among the cups and saucers, but instead of Dianka, who had died long ago, a huge dog, her son Trésor, and the very image of her, sat on his haunches in the corner. This scene, so dear, so incomparable in the eyes of Kalinovich, was completed by Mikheich standing in the doorway and holding a tray. He had purposely left the prompter's box in the last act and had actually taken off his boots and donned the slippers of the Caliph of Bagdad, so as to make no noise, and be able to hand round tea with greater propriety.

"Here he is!" said Nastenka, rising to meet her guest.

"Here I am!" he repeated, his face radiant.

"Allow me to introduce your old acquaintance, the Captain," went on Nastenka.

"Why, how do you do!" cried the Vice-Governor, stretching out his hand, though, to tell the truth, he would rather have fallen on the Captain's neck.

"How do you do!" responded the latter cordially, but with a touch of formality.

"Sit down, then," said Nastenka, trying to place a chair in front of Kalinovich. But Mikheich was before her. With the agility of a stage footman he brought up the most comfortable arm-chair, and with no less agility retreated to his former place.

Kalinovich sat down and fixed his eyes on Nastenka, unable to utter a word.

"Will Your Excellency partake of tea?" she asked jokingly.

"Thank you, I will," replied Kalinovich.

After this they again fell silent, quite unable to find words, and only looking into each other's eyes. In the meantime the Captain had begun carefully pouring out

tea, Mikheich holding out the tray to receive the cups.

"Ah, but Your Excellency has aged considerably," said Nastenka, at last, still gazing at Kalinovich tenderly. He passed his hand over his close-cropped greying hair.

"You haven't grown any younger yourself," he retorted.

"Naturally! But my feelings haven't aged," replied Nastenka flirtatiously.

"Perhaps mine haven't either," rejoined Kalinovich, smiling.

A grave expression suddenly appeared on Nastenka's face.

"I have heard, my friend. Everyone has told me how you work here, how you behave, and I tell you frankly that after this I have begun to respect you more than ever," she said, sighing.

Kalinovich looked down and hastened to address the Captain who, having poured out tea, was sitting beside him.

"So God has willed that you and I meet again."

"Yes," replied the Captain, and of course let the conversation drop.

"But tell me how long you have been in the theatre, and how you got into it?" Kalinovich asked Nastenka.

"It's a long story," she replied. "But we're all friends here, so I can speak freely. My uncle won't be angry any more, will you, Uncle?"

The Captain lowered his eyes.

"And you, Mikheich, no chattering—d'you hear?" she said, turning to the prompter with upraised forefinger.

"I understand, Nastasia Petrovna, and I admire you with all my heart," he replied, holding his head to one side sentimentally.

"Very well then," continued Nastenka, addressing

Kalinovich. "After that beautiful moment when you chose to run away from me, and then to pay me off so magnanimously, with money which I would have liked to fling in your face, together with a bronze candlestick or some other object. . . . Ah, well, if it hadn't been for Belavin I don't know what would have happened to me!"

Kalinovich smiled faintly.

"Belavin?" he echoed.

"Yes, Belavin. Why do you say it so emphatically?" asked Nastenka.

"*Vous étiez en liaison avec lui?*" asked Kalinovich, speaking French so that the Captain and Mikheich should not understand what he said.

Nastenka reddened.

"How d'you know that?" she asked, looking rather embarrassed.

It must be admitted that in tone and manner my heroine distinctly betrayed the actress. But this only charmed Kalinovich the more.

"I know everything you did in Petersburg," he said.

Nastenka smiled.

"Listen to me," she said. "If a woman ever told you or if one should ever tell you that she loved her husband or her lover, and that, though he died or was false to her, she would go on loving him to the end of her days, believe me, either she has never really suffered, or she is lying. None of us has the gift of loving one person only. It's simply a question of being able or not being able to love at all. In some these feelings are stronger, in others weaker, and still others don't have them at all. By loving you so profoundly and madly I challenge the whole world of women," exclaimed Nastenka.

At this Kalinovich kissed her hand.

"At the same time, however," she continued, "when you threw me over, and when one man was left beside

me who seemed to care for me as even a father or mother seldom do . . . I saw this and could not help becoming attached to him."

"And. . ." suggested Kalinovich.

"And what? There was no 'and'—that's just it," retorted Nastenka. "Uncle, won't you go and see about supper? Oh, if only we had Pelageya Evgrafovna with us, now! How glad she would be to see you, and how she would fête you," she said, turning again to Kalinovich.

"And where is she?" he asked.

Nastenka sighed.

"She's dead, my friend, she did not outlive my father a year. How she loved him! She did not love like you and me, hers was a simple, spontaneous nature. Get us some wine too, Uncle. I want Jacques to drink with me today. Remember how we all drank to you, when you became an author? How happy we were then! But why do I talk about that? The present is delightful, too. Go, Uncle."

The Captain winked at Mikheich and they went out together.

Kalinovich immediately took advantage of their absence to draw Nastenka to him, putting his arms round her and kissing her.

"Well?" he said, pulling her down on to his knees.

"Well?" countered Nastenka. "You say 'and.' But you are mistaken. I never lived with him. Why do you smile so mockingly? Do you think I'm holding something back?"

"A little, perhaps," smiled Kalinovich.

Nastenka shook her head.

"The time for me to protect my name has long passed, my friend," she said, smiling sadly. "And in proof of this I will frankly admit that I was not restrained from intimate relations with him by prudery, it was he who did not wish it. Is that enough for you?"

Kalinovich again smiled, saying:

"He's a fool!"

"No, he's wiser than you and me. He knew very well that to take up with a woman means to undertake moral and material responsibility for her."

"D'you think so?"

"Oh yes. He's one of those charming Petersburg bachelors who never go in for that sort of thing, and in my opinion that shows him to be a shallow person," concluded Nastenka excitedly.

"Oh! Feelings of wounded love may be here discerned, my dear!" cried Kalinovich.

"No, my friend," said she. "It was not so much wounded love as disappointment, the more acute that it was quite unexpected and unsuspected. You know very well yourself the deceptive heights at which that man was able to maintain himself, and which I only afterwards understood and appraised at their true value. You, for example, can fly into a rage, show yourself cold, harsh, but Belavin never strikes a false note. He is always lofty, kind, magnanimous. It's quite natural that he should have seemed to me an ideal man, but afterwards, at the first serious question put to us by life, there was nothing to show under the tinsel, and it's absurd and melancholy to remember what has been."

"But what happened?" asked Kalinovich.

Nastenka shrugged her shoulders.

"What happened was," she continued, "that I loved him in real earnest, grew fond of him, and at the same time could see that he was fond of me, because, after all, he would stay beside me for days on end, anticipate my slightest desires, read to me, console me. In the meantime my money was beginning to come to an end. I thought, in my provincial naïveté, you know, that there was no reason to conceal anything. One day I said to him quite simply and frankly: 'Listen, Belavin,' I said,

'I have no more money. Nothing to live on. Try and find me some work.' He seemed to support me in this idea with a strange eagerness, and the very next day, I believe, I had a letter from him, informing me that I could have the place of companion to an old Countess, a relation of his. Let go of me! My uncle will be back in a minute."

With these words Nastenka returned to her seat and appeared thoughtful. Kalinovich gazed at her steadily.

"Oh, how I suffered, my friend!" she began again. "You can have no ideal! The old woman turned out to be a perfect horror, proud, supercilious, and in about six months I began to feel that I was positively going into a decline from perpetual humiliation, continual expectation of being made to give her a foolstool or pick up her handkerchief. Belavin knew all this beforehand, and could have prevented it. But he simply sacrificed me. Worst of all, when at last I told him straight out that I couldn't go on living there, for she did nothing but insult me, that I was not born to be anyone's slave or servant, he suddenly began to sulk and lecture me, telling me that he loved me like a sister, that he was ready to do for me what he would do for his own sister ... and so on—always the same ... sister, sister ... at last I understood what he meant. My pride began to speak in me. As Gogol says, a person can hide what he is for a long time, but sometimes one impure impulse gives him away, and you can see right through him. And that's how it was with Belavin. Everything was as clear as daylight to me. 'I love you like a brother, myself, Mikhailo Sergeich,' I told him, 'and I wish no particular sacrifice from you.'"

"What did he say to that?" asked Kalinovich.

"Nothing, he said nothing, and you know he suddenly seemed to me like some old maid who takes an interest

in others out of sheer spiritual vacuity, and who fears nothing so much as spontaneous, serious relations with anyone. Such people only *play at feeling*, and that was his humanity, that was the proof of it."

Kalinovich gave a short laugh.

"And at last, good heavens, I appreciated you, by comparing him with you," cried Nastenka. "You're an egoist too, but you're a human being, you are always aspiring towards something, always suffering. Finally, you feel either sympathy or hostility for others and for their convictions, and put these feelings into practice at once. And Belavin never does. He argues about everything most nobly, and goes no further. Life is easy for him, for he is a spiritless, bloodless, heartless creature, gifted with nothing but a mind."

Kalinovich could stand no more.

"Oh, my darling! You clever thing!" he cried, trying to take her hand and draw her to him again.

"Don't, they're coming!" she said, and just then the Captain and Mikheich really did come in, carrying between them a table laid for supper.

"That man," went on Nastenka, still speaking of Belavin, "cherishes himself to such an extent that he is ready to run a thousand miles to escape the most insignificant sensation which could trouble him in the slightest degree, he never says a word which might lead to any demand being made on him. But Your Excellency and I are not like that, even though we may have committed all sorts of misdeeds in our lives, are we?"

"No, we're not like that," assented Kalinovich, gazing at her affectionately.

"Supper is ready," announced the Captain.

"Splendid, Captain! I'm ever so hungry," cried Nastenka. "*Monsieur, prenez votre place,*" she commanded Kalinovich, sitting down herself. He took a seat opposite her.

"I think my Ivolgin is cleverer than either of you," said Nastenka, shaking her head. "As clever as you may be."

"And is Ivolgin yours?" asked Kalinovich, tossing off a whole glass of wine, a thing he hardly ever did.

"Of course he's mine. And he's a fine person."

"What's so fine about him?"

"The fact that he is an artist in his soul," declared Nastenka. "Who was it that first discovered and supported in me the vocation of actress, and gave me what is called a crust of bread to last me all my life? Goodness knows he deserves to be loved simply for his passion for the theatre. His father had only just died then, and he immediately mortgaged his estate, hunted up an old entrepreneur and came to me. 'Look here, Nastasia Petrovna,' he said. 'We tried to act together, and nothing came of it. But now I am getting up a provincial company. I beg you, for God's sake, come with us and be our leading lady.' At first the proposal made me laugh, but then I thought to myself: 'After all, wouldn't it be a great deal more dignified to earn my bread on the stage than to be the slave of some withered old Countess,' and I decided I would. I wrote to my uncle: 'Let us go, my knight,' I said, 'and see if we can find some corner of the world for the insulted and oppressed. A carriage! A carriage!' Didn't I, Uncle?"

"Yes, in those very words," replied the Captain, smiling good-humouredly.

But Kalinovich had begun to frown.

"And then," continued Nastenka, turning to him. "All you young gentlemen, not excepting even Your Excellency, all of you, whatever you say, regard us, especially us provincial actresses, with condescension. You are very fond of running after us, of making up to us. You are even capable of wasting a little money on us, but you consider us only worthy of being your mis-

tresses—nothing more! But Ivolgin, dear man, saw things differently. The fact that I was an actress actually raised me in his eyes. For two years he dreamed of nothing but making me his wife, and my Uncle to this day scolds me for not marrying him. It was wrong of me, Captain, wasn't it?"

"Oh no, you must do as you please," replied the Captain, pouring out some more wine to Kalinovich.

"Mr. Ivolgin isn't good enough for you, if you'll excuse me," suddenly blurted out Mikheich, who was standing at the table with a plate in his hand.

"Well said!" cried the Vice-Governor.

"Is he, now, Your Excellency?" went on Mikheich. "What sort of a match would it be? What's the good of a wife putting in her own word according to her education, if her husband doesn't know what she's talking about? As if we hadn't heard his talk with our young lady . . . namby-pamby, and that's all. He can only scratch his head in bewilderment."

"Come, Mikheich, don't say that! You and I are not so very clever ourselves. . . . Besides, even if he is a bit silly, a fortune of two thousand souls goes with him. And that's such a pretty figure that I know some excellent people who were unable to withstand half of it," jested Nastenka, glancing at Kalinovich. But seeing that he frowned still more, she at once changed her tone. "Are you angry? Come now, surely not! Or are you jealous? Yes. Well then, listen to me," she said, holding out her hand to him. "Listen: one memorable day, I happened to read in the papers that a certain gentleman had been appointed Vice-Governor. . . . What I then felt no one knows but the night and the dark forest! I began asking everyone I could about you, like a mad-woman. Of course a great deal was said. At all costs, I thought, I've got to see this man. And I did. Now are you comforted?"

Kalinovich's face was indeed radiant.

"What did they tell you about me?" he asked.

"They said of course that you didn't take bribes, that you were very clever, that you knew a lot, but that you were a despot and ruthlessly severe. That you detested society and that you would probably never go to the theatre, for you would rather see a public execution than a theatrical performance. In a word, all the praise was extremely serious, and all the blame was mere nonsense, which I advise you to take no notice of," Nastenka summed up, again noticing that her last words had displeased Kalinovich.

"No, it's not nonsense! Pour me some more wine, Captain," he said, turning to Flegont Mikhailich.

The latter immediately poured him out some wine with evident pleasure.

"It's not nonsense," repeated the Vice-Governor in a choking voice, gulping down the wine. "Thousands of tongues declare that I am a cold-hearted man, a tyrant, a miscreant. But how is it that nobody can see in me one solitary good trait—that I have never been base and never bowed my head to anyone?"

"For heaven's sake! As if anyone doubted it!" cried Nastenka.

"Everyone does!" cried Kalinovich. "And there is no one to see that if I have ever attained anything in my life, it has never been by means of requests, by making up to anyone, but always by getting hold of somebody and making him serve me by force. My behaviour to you and my marriage are the only cases in which I consider I acted basely. But it was that very same delightful society which now calls down curses on me and which oppressed me from my childhood that made me. What was I to do? My nature is such that I require a great scope for my activities."

"I bitterly regret," Nastenka interrupted him, "that you did not go on writing. Your mind, your education and, finally, your attitude to life, make this your true vocation."

Kalinovich flew into a rage.

"What the deuce—literature! That was less suited to me than anything else. And after all, say I had become a kind of Russian Byron or Shakespeare—what then? We have seen the fate which overtakes all the most progressive people in that arena. This one is shot, that one dies in abject poverty, a third drinks himself to death or goes out of his mind. No, thank you! There's no life for poets and artists in our country so far. They've come to the wrong place."

With these words the Vice-Governor paused for some minutes, then, as if thinking aloud, he went on again, his arms flung wide:

"I have lived in this world for over forty years now and what do I see, what is it that prospers? Honourable toil, brilliant gifts, a great mind? Not so. It is the right sort of appearance, an accident of birth, or, finally, money. I chose the last, selling myself in marriage in the most loathsome way, and becoming a millionaire. The horizon then cleared immediately, and roads were opened before me in all directions. Gentlemen who never before deigned to notice me, now lay at my feet."

"All that I know and understand perfectly," said Nastenka.

Kalinovich grew more and more excited, and continued to drink.

"Look here," he said, taking Nastenka's hand. "I'm a little drunk now and this is perhaps the first moment of frankness in ten years of hellish, obstinate silence. You, my little friend, and you, Captain, are the only people in the world who I want to love and understand me just a little. Don't you know that from the first day

of my marriage I became an official, a public man, call it what you will, but no longer belonged to myself. I sought and desired only one thing: to do good to others. Tell me, why am I hounded by public opinion? A wealthy man, I lead an almost ascetic life. When I was an official I worked day and night, hired spies on my own money, became a stool pigeon, a detective myself, in order to expose some evil. In my present post I brought low a governor who had been a burden to the gubernia, bleeding it white for fifteen years. I sent that arrant scoundrel, Count Ivan, whom you may remember, to prison for a criminal offence, and dismissed perhaps five or six bribe-takers from the government service. And for all this, for the fact that I have cleared the gubernia of this muck, I am blamed. Even the fact that I appointed the two or three teachers of whose honesty I was convinced to unimportant posts, is held against me. They say I am gathering a gang for myself, although I would not raise by a farthing the salary of my own son, even if I saw him starve to death under my very eyes, unless I considered him of use to the service in which I wish to work, in absolute purity, with no respect for persons. That is my only dream. That is my glory. I have nothing but that in my life."

At this the Vice-Governor covered his face with his hands and bent his head.

"When you sum it all up," he continued in tones of bitter mockery, "you see that it is no joke to live and act in a society with such uncertain ideas of honour and justice."

"Who doesn't agree with that? But why take it so to heart?" said Nastenka.

"Take it to heart!" repeated Kalinovich mockingly. "How can I help taking it to heart when I know that everyone here is my enemy, and that I am one against so many. Say what you will—however strong one may

be, one can't help weakening, one is bound to be broken."

The conversation came to a stop for a short time, and since supper was over the Captain and Mikheich began clearing the table.

Nastenka and Kalinovich were again left alone.

"And what about your wife? Tell me about her," she said.

These words seemed to scorch Kalinovich. He raised his head abruptly and said:

"God will judge between my wife and me, which of us is more to blame, she or I. At any rate I know that at the present moment she would like to poison me, if she didn't fear the law."

"Good heavens! What are you saying, my friend?" cried Nastenka, and going up to Kalinovich she put her hand on his shoulder. "Why are you in such an irritable state? Tell me—do you pray?" she added in a whisper.

"I do," he sighed. "But how strange this meeting of ours is!" he went on, casting a glance at Nastenka. "Instead of exchanging words of love and tenderness we talk about God knows what. Were we always like that?"

"Yes. But what of it? We love one another the same as ever."

"I love you more," he said.

"And do you think I don't?" put in Nastenka, kissing him.

The Captain and Mikheich came in and she went back to her seat. There was silence for a few moments.

"I must go," said the Vice-Governor suddenly, rising.

"Where are you going?" asked Nastenka.

"Home," replied Kalinovich. "I have begun to believe in forebodings, and just now, explain it as you will," he continued, pressing at his temples, "I have so strong a sensation of being in the grip of some inexplicable fear that I feel clearly, I almost see, that at this very moment,

somewhere in the sky, by some mysterious caprice of fate, a turning-point in my life is taking place. Whether for the better or for the worse, I don't know, but a terrible turning-point, terrible."

"That foreboding is very easy to understand," said Nastenka. "You have met me again, and of course there will be a turning-point."

"No, it's not that. Good-bye! Good-bye, Flegont Mikhailich," said Kalinovich and took his departure.

Nastenka accompanied him to the door with feelings of anxiety and melancholy. The Captain hastened to light his way, and Mikheich, handing him his overcoat and taking the candle from the Captain, followed the Vice-Governor right up to the carriage.

"Don't hurt yourself here, Your Excellency, for God's sake," he warned him, holding him lightly by the arm, and then, slamming the carriage door, he cried, scraping his heel in the mud: "I wish Your Excellency a good night!"

"Thanks," said Kalinovich gently, and drove off.

When he got home his forebodings proved to have been justified. On the faintly illuminated staircase his foot struck against something white.

"What's that?" he asked the footman coming towards him.

"It's a trunk . . . the mistress's," replied the man uncertainly.

"What's it doing here?"

The footman was still more confused.

"The mistress has gone away, and it couldn't be got into the carriage, so she left it."

"Gone away—where to?" asked Kalinovich, still walking up the stairs.

"She must have gone on a journey, Sir, for she took post-horses. She left a letter for you on your desk," replied the footman, now deathly pale.

At this the Vice-Governor stopped and looked into the man's face.

"H'm," he said—it was almost a groan, and hardly breathing, he entered his study. There on the desk was the note from Paulina. She wrote:

"Your last act gives me the right to fulfil a long-cherished wish to leave you. If you should think of following me or try to make me live with you by force, I shall appeal to the government for protection."

Everything showed that Kalinovich had by no means expected a blow from this direction. Astonished, infuriated, and at the same time alarmed by the thought of public exposure, he seemed at first to be quite disconcerted, but next moment he rang the bell violently.

The footman came running in.

"Go and tell the coachman to return to the place I have just come from and give them this letter," he said, handing him a scrap of paper on which he had scribbled a few words.

"Wait!" he next shouted. "Send a gendarme to the chief of police and tell him from me that he is to go straight to the prison and report to me immediately." After giving these orders he shook his head as if to brace himself and went into Paulina's bedroom. The chiffonier in which her clothes and money were usually kept was not even locked, and proved to be quite empty. Kalinovich laughed and went back to his study. There, sinking into an arm-chair, he waited, his face perfectly blank, till Nastenka, for whom he had sent the carriage, entered with an anxious countenance.

"Congratulate me! I am now a perfectly free man. As good as divorced!" were the words with which he greeted her, going to meet her the moment she entered.

"What has happened, for heaven's sake, tell me!" she said, sitting down without removing her cloak or her hat.

"Oh, nothing! Only a plot . . . an intrigue against me. Not for nothing did I find her with him! That's where it all comes from. I suppose a whole train of mines and pitfalls has been laid, to blow me up once and for all. Well—we'll see!"

There was something strange in the way he shrugged his shoulders.

Nastenka gazed at him in terror. The clattering of a sword in the hall announced the approach of the chief of police. Kalinovich went out to meet him.

"What have you to tell me," he asked anxiously.

"All's well," replied the chief of police.

"And the prisoner, Count Ivan Ramensky?"

"Quite safe. He's asleep at the moment."

Kalinovich meditated for a few moments.

"Since he will not be required for interrogation, board up his chamber and give him his food through the grating," he said in a sternly imperative voice.

Both by training and nature the chief of police was inclined to all sorts of severe measures. But when he heard this order he was somewhat taken aback.

"Will there be a written order from Your Excellency?" he asked.

"There will," replied the Vice-Governor.

The chief of police bowed himself out. Nastenka trembled as she listened to this conversation.

"What do you mean to do, my friend?" she asked when Kalinovich came back to the study.

"Nothing. I only want to see that he is well locked up—they'll all be running away," he replied, laughing hysterically, and again sank into a chair. "There are so many of them and I am alone," he added, and all the muscles of his face twitched.

"How can you be alone, when I am near you?" said Nastenka, going up to him.

"Yes, you must be my wife, my friend, my sister. And let everyone know it. Do not leave me, my friend," said the Vice-Governor and, sobbing like a little child, he laid his head on her bosom.

She wound her arms round his neck and began kissing the top of his head, his forehead, his eyes. These sincere caresses seemed to calm him a little. Seating Nastenka at a slight distance from him, he immediately began writing, and kept it up almost all night. The next day he sent a special messenger to Petersburg with dispatches. It was easy to see that he feared something against which he was taking all possible measures.

XII

In the meantime there was still greater excitement in the gubernia. There were three main points which served as a basis for this excitement. The first of these was of course the appointment of the new Governor, in which post Kalinovich had been installed, with promotion to State Councillor. The next was the unexpected, hasty departure of the wife of the new Governor. Many asked not without astonishment why she had left. In conversation with certain persons, however, Kalinovich explained this perfectly satisfactorily, saying that he had long intended going with his family to Petersburg but that now, having received his present appointment, he was unable to do so, and had therefore permitted his wife to go alone. The third point, which exceeded all expectations, and strained all patience, was the reception given to the officials by the new Governor. The day after the receipt of the order confirming him, the chief of police instructed gubernia and district offices that their members, including the secretaries, were to appear on the 12th of March at eleven a. m. to be introduced to the new head of the gubernia. These instructions

naturally created a certain agitation. The author, for instance, is aware that Bobkov, who had been district judge for several years and was accustomed to drink eight glasses of vodka before dinner and ten glasses before supper, did not touch a drop for two whole days before the reception so as not by any chance to risk breathing the unpleasant smell of spirits in the face of the head of the gubernia. The magistrate, just as if he were going to church, had his beard trimmed the day before, went to the bath-house and just before the reception anointed himself frantically. The postmaster's assistant spent the hours from two till five walking past the shop windows, trying to choose a new hat and sword and finding none that were good enough. The midwife Ernestine, having heard of the severity of the new Governor, went about the town in the utmost anxiety, begging everyone she met to tell her whether she ought to introduce herself or not, for though only a woman she too was in the government service.

From nine o'clock in the morning of the 12th the street in front of the Governor's porch was crowded with carriages of the most varied types, from the clumsy *droshky* of Judge Bobkov to the dainty carriage of the Councillor for Finance. The young wives of the private secretary and the prosecutor, as if merely taking an airing, drove along the embankment several times just to peep through the windows and see what was going on in the Governor's apartments, where were assembled all the officials, from the 9th to the 5th ranks, most of them as plump as turtles, their somewhat drooping heads protruding from clumsy, but nevertheless gold-embroidered collars. Near-est of all to the study were the members of the Gubernatorial Board, their circle completed by Secretary Ekzarkhatov, who appeared to be calmer than anyone else present. The President of the Exchequer, holding his general's hat in his hand, and walking up and down past

the members of his chamber, was making obvious efforts to appear in good spirits, facetious, and even slightly "advanced," but his countenance betrayed his anxiety. The most conspicuous figure in the building commission was the staff officer who, the sarcastic Kozlenev said, had originally been created for a sentry-box on the high-road, but, on his turning out so clumsy, had been transferred to his present condition. The gubernia architect, who stood beside him, seemed to be positively wasting away. His pocket had become lighter by some three thousand rubles when Kalinovich was only Vice-Governor, and now it looked as if there would be no more pickings for him. The President of the Chamber of State Property had actually rounded up three regional chiefs, so as to make a complete showing of his subordinates. But the boots of one of these stank so atrociously of whale blubber that he had to be sent away. The postal authorities, who were related to the director of the Gymnasium, huddled together with the employees of the Ministry for Education. When all the departments were assembled, Kalinovich did not keep them waiting long. He appeared in full governor's uniform, but without the slightest ostentation, and on the contrary bowing with the utmost simplicity to all, remaining in the middle of the room, so that his face could be seen by everyone.

"By order of the government, gentlemen, I have been appointed head of this gubernia," he began, slurring the words and fixing his eyes on the ground. "The nature of my management has to a certain extent appeared from my activities as Vice-Governor, and then as Executive Governor. And so there is nothing left for me to do but to add a few words. All you whom I have the honour to see here, all we here assembled, are government officials, and there is no point in our wearing masks in front of one another. Each of us understands, of course, that the only ruling principle for every well-intentioned official

should be the law, his own common sense and, finally, perfect readiness to do good. He can have no other motives. At the same time no one will dispute the fact that such is in reality far from the case. I am not speaking now of the police authorities who, I know, permit the falsification of investigations, intentional delays in the infliction of penalties, and shameful disorder owing to ignorance of their business, to indolence and to drunkenness. And since all this is under my direct control, I declare that from henceforth I shall exercise the utmost severity, and will show not the slightest indulgence to anyone found guilty of similar abuses."

These words of Kalinovich caused everyone to glance involuntarily at the chief of police who, however, like a man of the world, did not so much as blink.

"But, in addition to such particular cases," continued the Governor, still not looking up, "there are, if I may so express myself, established abuses, which have become as it were legitimized, giving rise to no complaints and therefore never brought to light. By way of example: during my official journeys in the gubernia I have often happened to come across extremely inferior post-horses. When I have asked the reason for this, the keepers of posting stations have frankly told me that they could not manage otherwise, for they pay the local postal authorities fifteen rubles on every pair."

The gubernia postmaster turned pale and exchanged glances with his brother-in-law, the director of the Gymnasium.

"Whilst living, as a young man, in district towns, I used to hear as the most commonplace occurrence that in various offices trifling sums were exacted for every passport issued, peasants were made to pay for the washing of the floors, said to be trampled over by their dirty boots, and, finally, were made to contribute to the expense of the oil used in the icon lamps."

A smile passed over the countenances of the representatives of all departments but that of the exchequer.

"During recruiting I have also been the saddened witness of the way this duty, so onerous for our lower classes, is an occasion for haymaking, a holiday for the district heads, regional chiefs, recruiting office staffs, especially doctors," said the Governor, and all noticed that with these words he looked straight at the wry-necked medical inspector who, for his part, seemed to shrink into himself, knowing very well in his heart that in all matters concerning recruiting interests he had been not a man but a very fiend.

One of the district heads presented a sufficiently curious figure: on hearing the word "recruiting," his whole body seemed to lengthen, and the imploring expression of his eyes, the rueful contractions of his nose and lips seemed to say: "I know nothing about it, it was all the will of the authorities."

"All these abuses," continued the Governor, drawing himself up to his full height and raising his head, "taken together, are not so important as the bargains made by officials with all sorts of purveyors and contractors, who, whether they supply departments with wine or grain, or undertake any other work, are compelled, when naming the prices for contracts, to conciliate in the first place those persons who confirm the contracts, next those who do the work and, finally, those who accept it when finished." Saying this, Kalinovich paused for a few seconds. Complete silence reigned in the hall, it could be seen that all were profoundly offended.

"It is probable that not a hundredth part of all that I have just now indicated exists in this gubernia. But if anything of the sort does exist, all we, responsible persons, will of course make it our sacred duty to destroy and eradicate it," he ended in tones which made the remark sound savagely sarcastic rather than well-mean-

ing, and then, bowing to all, he hastened back to his study.

The silence continued for a short time.

The first to break it was the President of the Exchequer.

"What's the meaning of it all?" he blurted out.

"Everyone got it... he castigated everyone," put in the President of the Chamber of State Property.

"Restless fellow, very restless," remarked the staff officer of the building commission thoughtfully.

The postmaster and the director of the Gymnasium exchanged expressive glances. The members of the board, who were accustomed to the sallies of their former Vice-Governor, were the first to go back to their homes, and the rest followed their example.

"What's the meaning of it?" repeated the President of the Exchequer, as he descended the staircase, and he began making whispered plans with some of the more important personages for meeting and discussing the whole affair.

"Absolutely essential," they agreed and that same evening about ten persons gathered in his house. In order to prevent the news of their meeting spreading, they sat in the host's study, behind closed shutters, and even with drawn curtains. Most indignant of all was the host himself.

"Your Excellency," he said, addressing the gubernia Marshal, a sworn foe of Kalinovich ever since the affair of the Count, "I'm his senior in years, in the service, and, finally, in rank, for after all he's only yesterday's half-baked State Councillor, and I'm Major-General to my Emperor, though I shall always and everywhere concede him the first place as head of the gubernia. But I can't stand him telling us before a public meeting that we are all bribe-takers. I can't stand it!"

The Marshal nodded his approval.

"What right has he to do that?" interposed the young prosecutor. "I have inspected several gubernias, accompanied by members of the Senate. They are invested with great powers, but even they did not treat subordinates like that."

"And it's my fault if he comes across an inferior post-horse in the street!" contributed the gubernia postmaster.

The engineer-colonel and the merchant Papushkin arrived for the discussion.

"I have brought Mikhailo Trofimich here. He's just come from Petersburg and heard something about our new chief," said the colonel, indicating the contractor.

"Tell me," said the host without beating about the bush, "what do they think of him there? Is he mad or a fool, or is he so clever that we here are unable to understand him?"

"I'll tell you what they say about him," said Mikhailo Papushkin bluntly. He was no whit abashed to find himself in the general's house, and sank into an arm-chair without waiting for an invitation. "They say he's a man with great influence. First I spoke to some of the authorities there—since nothing good is to be expected for us in dealing with him direct, you know.... 'Look here, gentlemen,' I said, 'levy a contribution on us if you like, but for God's sake relieve us of that man.' 'No, Mikhailo Trofimich,' they said, 'don't ask that! Try and get on with him. Everything is done according to his desire here.'"

"Why do they think so highly of him? Is he a genius?" asked the gubernia Marshal.

"God knows, gentlemen, the whys and wherefores when a man is promoted in our country! The most likely explanation is that he has good recommendations—a letter from Khovansky, no doubt. They say there that he keeps his place all on account of his wife. She's related to some grand lady in great favour with the minis-

ters. The Lord knows! They chattered a lot... of course I didn't understand all of it, but they chattered a lot."

"So that's it," said the Marshal, putting two and two together. "And now he's sent his wife there to strengthen those ties."

"Perhaps," sighed the host. "At any rate, gentlemen, I consider that I myself, and you, Fyodor Ivanich," turning to the staff officer of police, "and Your Excellency, of course, and you, too," he added, addressing the gubernia Marshal and the postmaster, "in fact all of us must inform our chiefs of the reception given us, and ask for protection, for he has only spoken so far, and when he begins to act, it will be impossible for us to go on in the service."

Almost everyone agreed with this. Mishka Papushkin alone looked somewhat grimly at the president.

"Why will it be impossible? Nonsense! It will be possible," he said.

"Ah, but it won't," retorted the host irritably. "You say that, old man, because you don't know what the service is, you don't understand."

"It will be," insisted Mikhailo Trofimich. "We have a very good fable in the country about this sort of thing. Shall I tell it you?"

"This is no time for your fables, Mikhailo Trofimich," interrupted the staff officer.

"Wait a bit!" interrupted Papushkin. "You just listen to it, and see if you don't learn something from it. It was like this, gentlemen," he continued, smoothing his beard and moustache. "Long, long ago there lived a very avaricious peasant in a village. He was so mean that when he started threshing his rye he never let a single grain be wasted. Among all his other property he had a flock of sheep. One day he heard that in Germany they shear the sheep and make a big profit on the wool. This

fellow, being no fool, went straight to his fields, started shearing one sheep, and then another, but the silly sheep weren't used to it, and they started kicking. So it wasn't so easy for him, you know. And one sheep he wounded in the side by accident, another out of rage. . . . And the poor sheep ran away from him with their wool cut off and their sides wounded. They were so frightened that they decided to go to the goat for advice. 'You silly fools,' said the goat. 'Just lie still—that's all. Let him do what he likes—shear you. He'll stop when his hands begin to get blistered. And in the meantime your wool will gradually begin to grow again, and your sides won't suffer any more.' And I would advise you, all you generals and colonels, in the present case to listen to the goat. 'Don't kick, let him do what he likes—shear you! Remember the proverb: 'One man can't finish the whole pot!' He'll get tired of it, believe me."

The end of Mikhailo Trofimich's fable made them all smile.

"It's a good fable," said the Marshal.

"That it is," repeated the contractor and soon after, with clumsy bows, he went away.

XIII

It seemed as if the words falling from the lips of Papushkin had been wisdom itself. His advice spread all over the gubernia. Almost all the officials, both those who had been at the discussion, and those who had not, said to themselves: "Deuce take him! Let him do what he likes—shear us! In the first place there's always the wool in store. And in the second place, give it time and it'll grow again."

Kalinovich himself seemed to behave according to Papushkin's fable. He began to throw down and shear one official after another, as if they were sheep. The first to

go was of course the manager of the Governor's office, in whose place Ekzarkhatov was appointed. Then a blow was dealt at the Chamber for State Property, where, by order of the Governor, the manager was dismissed and regional chiefs changed about. The police, from the men on duty in the streets to the inspectors, were changed. The red-nosed chief of police was considered to be in danger of the same fate. And in addition to all this gubernatorial inspection was anticipated. The superintendents of police, hardly ever leaving their districts, were squeezing arrears out of debtors, driving men out to mend the roads for the sake of appearances. By means of abuse, blows and even personal expenditure, the mayors of district towns were getting streets paved and fences painted. In state departments, courts of justice, municipal councils and in Dumas, clerks sat writing in their offices day and night.

But while such activity was going on in the various departmental and administrative zones, very strange rumours were being spread in society. Sashka Kozlenev, in his capacity of theatre-goer, aware of all the backstage secrets, was the first to go about the town telling everyone that the new Governor, that ideal of official behaviour, had, immediately after his wife's departure, formed an intimacy with the actress Minayeva and spent all his evenings with her. This fact appeared so very extraordinary that two ladies from the highest circles considered it their duty to pay Nastenka a visit which she naturally did not return. While I can confidently assure my readers that such was the fact, nothing would induce me to name these ladies, for anyone who knows the strictness and refinement of the attitude to morals in a gubernia will realize the enormous concession they made, positive proof, by the way, of the sacrifices women are nowadays ready to make for the sake of their

husbands' careers. In the meantime the Governor, as if desirous of showing his utter disrespect for society, really had begun, as was said, to *kick up his heels*. He would often drive from his office in broad daylight straight to Nastenka's house, where, in the sight of all, his carriage waited at the gate till late at night. Nastenka was also sometimes seen driving to his house in his own carriage, without even the window glass being raised, and the Governor once went so far as to pass down the boulevard at the most crowded hour in an open phaeton, with Nastenka at his side.

The first to remark this and blush with shame were the young wife of the prosecutor and her friend, who were going for their usual stroll. And the wife of the President of the Criminal Chamber, who had been so upset by the resignation of the former Governor, this time rushed frantically out of her garden, jumped into a hired carriage, and told the driver to follow the Governor's phaeton.

Under her very eyes Kalinovich drove up to his house, got out, and then, helping out Minayeva as if she were his wife, disappeared with her through the glass door. Nastenka then ran up the stairs as if quite at home, passed through the ball-room into the drawing-room, and sat down carelessly on a sofa, exclaiming: "Oh, how tired I am! Isn't it hot?" Kalinovich regarded her with mournful tenderness. I cannot pass over in silence the fact that if anyone had seen my heroine as a little girl they would never have recognized her, so pretty had she become. Thirty is usually a disastrous age for women with round, rosy faces—the roses become glaring red spots, the eyes go dim, the features become still more trivial. But this is not the case with interesting faces, the covering for spiritual beauty. At this age, mind, emotions, even passion, begin to show more vividly, and

Nastenka's face belonged to this group. Moreover, she dressed with great taste. Petersburg and the profession of an actress had completed her education in this respect.

At about eight o'clock a manservant brought in a tea-service on a huge silver tray, and arranged it on a table set aside for that purpose. Nastenka, just as if she were the lady of the house, poured out tea. Flegont Mikhailich appeared at a side door, solemnly followed by the dog Trésor.

"Good evening, Uncle," said the Governor in friendly accents.

The Captain bowed in his usual manner and sat a little apart, his eyes lowered. A few days before he had had a long talk with Kalinovich in his study, from which he had emerged looking, if not exactly sad, extremely upset. Arrived at home he began blinking in a very odd manner.

"Well, Uncle, did you speak to him?" asked Nastenka.

"I did," replied the Captain.

"And are you satisfied, do you understand that what is done is done, and cannot be undone?"

"Yes."

"And are you at last convinced that that man loves me?" said Nastenka in conclusion.

"Yes," assented Flegont Mikhailich, and after this he began to spend all his evenings with Nastenka at the Governor's house. To his simple mind rank was of such enormous importance that Kalinovich now seemed to him quite another man, and he never allowed himself in any way to forget where and in whose presence he was. As for the Governor, after the worries of office which he endured almost every morning, the company of these kindly folk apparently gave rest to his soul, and a feeling of quiet happiness began to grow within him. On this

evening, however, he seemed so melancholy and glum that Nastenka asked him what the matter was.

"It's nothing. Ring the bell, will you, my friend?" he replied.

She tugged at the bell-pull.

The footman entered.

"Has anything come by the post? Send a gendarme to Ekzarkhatov."

"He is here himself, Your Excellency," replied the footman.

"Why didn't you tell me, you blockhead? Ask him in," exclaimed the Governor anxiously. "Nikolai Ivanich, why didn't you tell them to let me know you were here? What foolish delicacy!" he said to the advancing Ekzarkhatov.

The latter handed him a pile of letters. Kalinovich flung them down scornfully till he got to one marked: *To be delivered personally*. Breaking the seal, he read it attentively and then gave such a strange laugh that everyone looked at him in surprise, and Nastenka was quite frightened.

"That blessed mail always upsets you," she said.

Without answering her, Kalinovich read the letter again.

"They ask for explanations of another three denunciations," he said at last, turning to Ekzarkhatov with a scornful grimace, and handing him the letter. "Now they are sending regular interrogatory items, as if I were a criminal or a prisoner under interrogation."

Ekzarkhatov did not know whether to read the letter or not.

"Look through it, read it. I conceal nothing, I am not ashamed of myself," said Kalinovich and laughed again.

Nastenka looked at him anxiously. She could see that he was in the grip of fury.

"I intend neither to conceal nor to be ashamed of anything," repeated the Governor, and turned suddenly to Ekzarkhatov. "Listen," he said, "wouldn't you like, before it's too late, to have the post of mayor or police superintendent instead of your present position? I still have enough influence to do that for you."

This proposal evidently astonished and offended Ekzarkhatov.

"Don't you consider me fit for my present post?" he asked.

"Good heavens! You know I don't mean that!" cried Kalinovich. "But I myself may be dismissed. Another may come who may treat you badly, and you will be without a crust."

Ekzarkhatov drew himself up, raised his drooping head, and looked quite dignified.

"As far as I know myself, Yakov Vasilich," he said, "I serve not individuals, but the cause. What have I to be afraid of?"

Kalinovich burst out laughing.

"Not individuals! He wants to forward the cause while in the service. That's not the way to serve here, Sir!" he exclaimed, and laughing bitterly he began pacing up and down the room. The expression on his face was so desperate that none of those present dared to address him.

"Be so kind," he said at last, turning to Ekzarkhatov, "as to write an answer for tomorrow's post. They ask on what grounds the Count was arrested, and why his case is being investigated without a deputy from the gentry. Tell them the police authorities have the right, on their own initiative, to arrest any person committing a criminal offence, since, if they waited till deputies had been found, all criminals would escape. Quite clear, I think? And as for interrogations being held without a

deputy, there is no law compelling examining judges to have anyone present during the interrogation of gentlemen of education, and I am not going to invent new regulations for this purpose. As to the licence, I would also state that in applying money under them to municipal requirements, and thus returning to society some infinitesimal percentage of the enormous profits amassed by licence dealers, I was not infringing the law. Put this down, word for word."

"Won't they be offended?" asked Ekzarkhatov.

"And what about me? Am I not offended? Didn't they insult me, when I consider myself in no way to blame in the service?" exclaimed the Governor, putting his hand to his head. Then, obviously trying to appear calm, he began again:

"To the question about my inaugural speech, write it out in full, all that you remember, word for word; what I said about bribes, and the sort of bribes I mentioned. If you have forgotten anything I will fill up the gaps. I remember it all. Those were no mere idle words. Well, good-bye for the present. Go and see to it."

Ekzarkhatov went out, his head bent.

"What is it all about, and where do all these unpleasantnesses spring from? You worked and acted just the same before, and they promoted you, and now..."

Kalinovich gazed steadily and mockingly at her.

"It's because I have not been so fortunate as to please my wife, Paulina Alexandrovna, ha, ha! And I am no match for her, of course! I have fifty thousand rubles in that little box, paid to me for marrying her. I never take any risks with that money, for it was obtained with my blood and now it is all I have. But she, thanks to the Divine Creator, still has a thousand souls and hundreds of thousands of rubles. I am no match for her."

"They say Mediokritsky went with her—why?" asked Nastenka.

"Yes, the petty thief, Mediokritsky. He is now her chief confidant and almost every week gives dinners to all sorts of gentlemen at Dusseau's, for the purpose of injuring me and helping the Count, and by the way he writes to that scoundrelly relative of his, the former manager of the Governor's office, that if God enables him to destroy me he will probably come back here an official of the gubernia office."

With these last words the Governor once more burst out laughing.

"But how can they destroy you?" asked Nastenka.

Kalinovich shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose," he began in sarcastic tones, "they will at first, remembering my services, content themselves with palming me off on some small middle-class gubernia with a mild reproof, adjuring to mend my ways both officially and privately, for, as they write, indignation is felt not merely at my official activities, but also with myself as an individual with restless tendencies and no humane principles whatever! Ha, ha!"

"But why should you let it worry you? Let them send you somewhere else. We can be happy anywhere," said Nastenka.

Kalinovich gave a deep sigh.

"No," he said, "it would be wounding, very wounding! It would be wounding for me, knowing as I do that I have put my whole soul, my very heart into the service for ten years. And then it would be such a pity for the cause, which, whatever they say, has improved a little."

Soon after this little scene even society began to guess that the wind was beginning to blow from another direction. To begin with, a special commission was suddenly sent from Petersburg to look into the Count's case, under the presidency of Councillor of State Openkin. It would have been exceedingly obtuse not to see in

this a snub to the Governor, especially since the commission itself began its activities by giving immediate orders for the release of Count Ivan on his daughter going bail for him. This circumstance produced great joy in society, and all those not too closely dependent on the Governor for their positions went to congratulate the Count the very next day. He was, however, cautious enough to give out that he was ill, and while thanking them all for their sympathy, received no one. In the meantime the order prohibiting the old postmaster, in connection with the Count's case, from leaving the town was rescinded, and he went straight to his district office. The engraver was also released, as a person, against whom there was absolutely no evidence. Even the Count's servant and the cantonist—according to the clerk sent to the Gubernatorial Office to write down the findings of the commission—even these two were now only detained, one for having given conflicting evidence, the other for crimes having nothing to do with the case. In a word, the whole case seemed to have been given a different aspect. One of the members of the commission, a man still young and extremely well-educated, probably more outspoken than the rest, actually gave this away in talk.

"Your Governor, gentlemen, has always been a very strange individual, but in the case of the Count he has behaved like a madman," he said in front of hundreds of people, who smiled ambiguously in reply, but made no rejoinder; only the stout graduate, who was sitting at another table, hearing the young man's words, spoke to him far from politely, and asked:

"What makes you say the Governor acted like a madman?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders and began to explain himself, point by point.

"In the first place," he said, "the Governor put a

gentleman in prison, although there had been as yet no crime committed."

"No crime?" echoed the graduate stubbornly. "It was committed when the Count drew up a false certificate—that's when it was committed."

"Nothing of the sort," continued the young man in his former business-like tones. "The crime in this case could only be considered as committed when the contract secured under this certificate failed. The Treasury, therefore, should have continued working on the basis of securities which have turned out to be non-existent, and then only would there have been an actual wrong, and a crime proven."

"And if, with God's help, he had undertaken the contract on this falsified certificate, and brought it to a fortunate conclusion, then all would have been well?" asked the graduate.

"I suppose so," said the young man, somewhat abashed by the question.

"I think so, too," said the graduate with obvious sarcasm.

"I congratulate you on that," said the young man, equally sarcastic, and he turned back to his other listeners. "Apart from these theoretical considerations," he continued, "see what the facts themselves show: the Governor says Count Ramensky drew up a false certificate. The Count says the act he presented was not false, but applied to the property of the N. postmaster, which really was issued by the civil chamber a year before the afore-mentioned certificate. The building commission replied to the effect that, owing to the passage of time, it could not remember what the certificate inspected by it had been. The Count's signature to his petition was recognized by half the secretaries, and not recognized by the other half. So how many chances are there either way?"

"So the Governor himself drew up the false certificate?" asked the graduate.

"I know nothing about that," replied the young man evasively. "Investigators are not allowed to come to any conclusions on a case, you know, so as not to confuse or involve the judicial authorities. I speak only of facts!"

"Facts," repeated the graduate, looking him in the face, and saying almost aloud: "Oh, unjust judges!" he rose clumsily from the table and went to the billiard room.

"Counsel for the defence!" the young man called after him.

Several heads corroborated his thought with slight nods. This conversation was of course retailed all over the town by the next day.

"Things look bad for the Governor," was the almost unanimous decision of the gubernia diplomats, but Papushkin, who was not fond of giving up his convictions, replied to this: "Not a bit of it! He'll get over it."

"Will he, though?" they cried. "He's afraid himself. He's done nothing either in the office or the Gubernatorial Board for the last fortnight. He's taken fright."

"Not he!" insisted Papushkin. And his words were corroborated in a very short time.

A fire broke out in the government salt depots, how, God alone knows! Kalinovich was the first to gallop to the place, riding bareback, after which he scolded the chief of police, swore he would send the chief of the fire station into the army, and took control himself. The feeble fire brigade, under his fierce command, soon displayed heroic courage and gallantry, and just when Kalinovich, covered with dust and soot, and soaked with water, was so close to the flames that his horse snorted incessantly and kept backing away, just at that very

moment, coming from dinner with the President of the Exchequer and therefore distinctly tipsy, Councillor of State Openkin drove up to have a look at the fire. Peering through his spectacles at the terrible scene of destruction, he too began shouting at the police officer, and ordering the men not to turn the hose on that part of the wall they were dousing. Hearing this, Kalinovich suddenly turned his horse towards him and shouted in a loud voice:

"Mr. Openkin, I and the chief of police are here and therefore there is no need for anyone else to give orders."

"I am giving orders and acting on behalf of State interests, Your Excellency," retorted the Councillor, showing temper, too.

"I'm the master here and I alone must look after State interests," almost yelled Kalinovich, smiting his chest. "Officer, put a chain round the site of the fire, and don't let any idlers get inside it! If anyone does, put him under arrest!" he cried to the officer sent to witness the extinguishing of the fire. The latter passed on the command, and a chain was stretched almost under the very nose of the State Councillor. Some schoolboys who had come running up to see the fire laughed heartily at this. Openkin turned green, but trying to laugh it off, got into the president's carriage again and drove away.

On the day following this incident the commission ceased all its activities and returned to Petersburg, society remaining in torturing suspense. Everyone was longing to know how it would all end. At last, on the 18th of December everything was settled. A document arrived which made the copyists, the senior clerks, and the secretaries to the board sit up in their chairs, their eyes bulging and their fingers outspread. The Secretary of the Exchequer galloped off in a *droshky* to the President, who was still at home. Almost the whole

town trooped to the house of the gubernia Marshal at his twelve o'clock luncheon and satisfaction was written on most of the faces. The gubernia architect, meeting Papushkin in the street again, called out to him joyously:

"Well? Your prophecy didn't come true, did it?"

"Ach! *He went too far, too far,*" replied Papushkin.

In the document it was written that Kalinovich was discharged from the service and sued for illegal acts during the fulfilment of his duties both as Vice-Governor and in his present post.

* * *

Having appeared on the scene with my hero's first entry into the service of the State, I consider myself fully entitled to part with him on his resignation.... What else can I do for him? The season of youth, love or new amorous ties of any sort had long passed for him, and he was forced to abandon for ever the official activities which would have been appropriate to his years, and might have summoned him to the struggle again. Like a wounded eagle, he joined the ranks of the dissatisfied and settled down modestly with Nastenka and the Captain in Moscow. Of his enemies, the Count, emerging from his case without a stain on his reputation, returned to his estate and resumed his former way of life. The resurrection of this phoenix had an extremely simple explanation.

It was said that, in connivance with Mediokritsky, he had so managed Paulina's fortune that she lost her whole capital and half her estate. Abandoned by all, betrayed by all, the unfortunate woman did not survive this blow and with the first melting of the ice on the Neva experienced in solitude the last tragedy lying in wait for all—the agony of death. Six months after she died Kalinovich married Nastenka. This fact, it would seem, unravels

all the threads for me, as a novelist, but I am not able, like the old spinners of romance, to say that my hero, after prolonged agitations, at last reached the peaceful haven of quiet domestic happiness. This is far from the truth. Broken morally and physically, Kalinovich only decided to marry again because he had nothing else to look forward to, and Nastenka, who seems to have loved him more because of her fond memories than in reality, gave up acting and became the wife of a Councillor of State chiefly from a sense of duty and the consciousness that since she was the only thing left in the world to this man, she was bound to do what she could to support and sweeten his ruined and yet still cherished life. The Captain was the only one who really enjoyed himself, looking after the whole household and never forgetting to speak of his nephew and niece as "Their Excellencies."

TO THE READER

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Please send them to 21, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

А. Писемский

ТЫСЯЧА ДУШ

Роман в четырех частях